UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Lingue e Letterature Europee e Americane
Classe LM-37

Tesi di Laurea

Students with special educational needs and foreign language instruction

Relatore
Prof. Fiona Clare Dalziel

Laureanda
Martina Minati
n° matr.1037710 / LMLLA

Anno Accademico 2012 / 2013

Language learning is a difficult journey across a demanding landscape
by extremely complex beings who behave in complicated ways.
(Carol Griffiths)

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

It has been a long journey from the start of this study to its completion. Along the way, I have met many interesting people and have learned a great deal. I thank all the people who helped and encouraged me to persevere with this study.

This thesis could not have been written without the help of my Professor Fiona Dalziel, who I thank for advice, guidance and encouragement. She inspired me at every office hour, motivated me and appreciated my work: she is a really good example of a Good Language Teacher.

A special thanks goes to the amazing Miss Laura Fusano and her staff who allowed me to spend three great months working at the King Richard School. Eugenio, Lina and Mr Joe gave me some great advices and the students rendered me more mature and responsible. I am also very grateful to the PGCE students I met through my placement in England, in particular Michela, Salvo, Tiziana and Silvia.

I thank my parents who have allowed me to take this Masters Degree and always taught me that I need to shoot for the moon because even if I fail, I will land among the stars. I thank all of my friends from whom I have never stopped learning.

Finally, a specific thank you goes to my English friends, who gave me their vision about languages and English education and who gave me the opportunity to confront my opinions with theirs. In particular, I thank my dear friend Chloe who revealed many tips about English education, and for her support and help.

Introduction

Difficulties in foreign languages are common for many secondary school students, but especially for those with special educational needs (SEN). In terms of second language learning it has been observed that in the same classroom setting some students progress rapidly whereas some of them struggle a lot making very slow progress. This happens because the characteristics of different individuals are not the same. Diversity is a typical characteristic of a classroom, which is caused by differences in students' levels, interests, gender, abilities, cultural and family background, all kinds of difficulties and learning disabilities. Language learning disabilities, in turn, are a wide range of different kinds of difficulties that affect the understanding, production and development of spoken and/or written language. They are not the only cause for foreign language learning difficulties. The student's motivation to learn, language aptitude, learning strategies, attitudes towards the language, and personality are all factors that affect second language learning. Teachers should be accustomed to various methods of teaching in order to deal with diversity in the classroom.

The following work will illustrate the various factors which affect language learning; students with special educational needs and the English education system will be presented, incorporating modern foreign language learning and programmes for students with special educational needs in secondary schools. I chose this topic as I taught Italian and Spanish at the "King Richard School" (Secondary Comprehensive School of Portsmouth) from October 2012 to February 2013 and realised how different the UK teaching system is compared to the Italian one. Hence, my love and interest for languages and teaching made me pursue this thesis, showing the importance of modern languages and the importance in integrating students with special needs. Furthermore, from this work-experience I could see how teachers and school staff 'classify' the various students who, as a consequence, are considered 'different' from the others due to their needs: teachers had to prepare different homework and activities according to their individual differences. I could note that, if

on one hand students with special educational needs were included and integrated in the foreign language classrooms and hence treated equally to the others, on the other hand they were always identified through abbreviations indicating their disabilities. The differentiation has a significant impact on the evaluation: teachers expected more effort from some students, and less from those with special needs. From this experience, arose my will to investigate the UK educational system, the policy adopted by the UK government, the students with SEN and the various approaches and methodologies used by teachers, and increased so much that I decided to write this thesis. While I was writing it, I kept firmly in my mind the question of whether students with SEN should be included in the mainstream foreign language teaching. It is a question to which a concrete and definite answer cannot be given as extensive research is required.

The aim of this thesis is to state which methodologies and approaches teachers, specifically secondary school teachers, could use in teaching foreign languages to students with special educational needs who are included in foreign language instruction.

The first chapter deals with the individual differences that are important factors for successful language learning, paying particular attention to their influence on the acquisition of a second language. The cognitive, affective, physiological and social factors are briefly described in order to state the importance of individual differences in the learning process.

The second chapter seeks to clarify the concept of children with special educational needs. Students with SEN have been widely studied and criticized for several years and several different definitions have been given. It is important to bear in mind that a disability can be considered as such in one culture, but not in another. Hence, the impairments considered to be significantly disabling in each society depends on the estimates of the prevalence of SEN (Stakes and Hornby, 2000). However, the term *special needs* deals with different aspects: the cognitive and learning disabilities; social, emotional and behavioural qualities; communication and interaction; sensory,

physical and medical conditions. These areas are in turn divided into specific SEN categories, which will be briefly described. However, although the Department of Education recognised all these types in order to help schools and education prepare for data collection, we need to keep in mind that many students may have more than one difficulty (Department of Education, 2006). Finally, the various types of support for these children are briefly presented: School Action, School Action Plus, Assessment and Statement. Parents, teachers and school staff need to find the way to help their children and students, support them, ease stress, encourage them to make progress and lead them towards success.

The third chapter deals with important aspects of the historical development of mainstream provision in the United Kingdom; it outlines the developments that have taken place in recent years in modern foreign language (MFL) teaching and learning and in the field of special educational needs. Since the early 1960s MFL were taught to a group of high achieving pupils, teachers of such classes operated in a calm atmosphere where order, hard work and co-operation reigned and where many teachers enjoyed teaching highly disciplined, respectful pupils. With the arrival of the comprehensive system, teachers had to contemplate teaching all pupils, many of whom were low achievers. Certain teachers were concerned that it would be very difficult to engage pupils with learning difficulties, behavioural problems and emotional difficulties in MFL learning. Furthermore, while some believed that the policy of inclusion had generated advantages, such as the facilitation on outcomes for pupils with SEN, others believed that it brought disadvantages, such as the difficulty to exclude pupils for anything other than very serious offences (Davis and Florian, 2004). In any case, teachers have been experiencing the effects of interpretations of these policies at Local Authority and school level. There has been a change in mainstream and special school populations that has led teachers to develop different strategies and approaches to accommodate students' necessities. In fact, teaching is a complex activity that requires, for its constitution and for its efficiency, strategies that have to be deeply studied and coherent. The importance of having an appropriate

curriculum, methodology, and teaching and learning strategies will then be highlighted. Subsequently, the thesis discusses teaching and learning strategies in MFL classrooms and assessment issues in MFL learning with regard to pupils with SEN.

Finally, the fourth chapter presents the discussion and conclusion. It has been stated that one of the primary objectives in foreign language learning and teaching today is certainly learning more about the students and increasing the awareness in personal differences in the language classroom. In the history of language teaching, there has been much debate about which methods the teachers needed to apply to the teaching-learning process. However, in modern language teaching today, relating individually with the students on an academic basis and trying to learn more about the student profile provides further advantages for the language learner and for the teacher to meet the program goals and objectives (Erton, 2010). Here, the personality of the student appears to be at the core of the issue. According to Cook (1993) "there are three reasons for being interested in personality. They are: first, to gain scientific understanding, second, to access people and next, to change people" (Cook, 1993: 3). In order to develop strategies for learning and teaching purposes, personality should be studied by the language teachers to provide a more fruitful learning and teaching environment both for themselves and the learners, because there is a close connection between the personality of the student and the style and strategy that the student develops in order to learn. As Felder and Henriques (1995) state

> students learn in many ways, by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively; memorising and visualising (Felder and Henriques, 1995: 21).

Briefly put, there are several reasons for the language teachers to understand the logic of studying the learning styles:

> Everyone has a learning style. Our style of learning, if accommodated, can result in improved attitudes toward learning and an increase in productivity, academic achievement, and creativity (Griggs, 1991: 3).

As an addition to Griggs' ideas, the teachers should develop their own teaching styles and strategies in such a way as to meet the various needs of the learners. This also gives the language teacher a chance to better understand his/her strengths and weaknesses in the teaching profession.

However, considering the personality traits parallel with the number of students, there will be many different learning styles since the instructor does not have one student, or more students sharing the same characteristic features in a language classroom; a student's ability to learn in the classroom depends on his/her characteristic approach t learning, but also on his/her prior preparation. Modern foreign languages need to be taught to all pupils, including lower achievers and pupils with SEN, as supported by evidence from the Action Group for Languages (AGL) Report (2000): *Citizens of a Multilingual World* in Scotland and the National Languages Strategy: *Languages For All, Languages For Life* (2002), in England. The evidence available to the author suggested that the benefits to pupils learning a MFL outweighed any negative influences. When appropriate conditions were in place and the work was at a suitable pace and level then lower achievers and pupils with SEN could achieve success in the field of MFL learning. It is important to remember as Roberts (2005) reminds us that not all learning is academic with outcomes measured in terms of test scores and qualifications. All pupils should be capable of learning and developing as individuals. Progress and achievement should be promoted and recognised in a range of contexts not least because success is not based exclusively on academic prowess. Regardless of the type of delay a child experiences, it is important to keep in mind that all children can learn and should be allowed to participate in everyday routines and activities to the best of their capabilities. This interaction not only benefits the child with special needs, but also helps children without special needs learn about tolerance and acceptance of others.

Concluding,

> languages are part of the cultural richness of our society and the world in which we live and work. Learning languages contributes to mutual understanding, a sense of global citizenship and personal fulfilment. Pupils

learn to appreciate different countries, cultures, communities and people. By making comparisons, they gain insight into their own culture and society. The ability to understand and communicate in another language is a lifelong skill for education, employment and leisure in this country and throughout the world. Learning languages gives pupils opportunities to develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and to express themselves with increasing confidence, independence and creativity (QCA, 2009 in TDA[1], 2009: 4).

[1] QCA refers to Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; TDA refers to Training and Development Agency for Schools

Chapter 1

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learning more about the students and increasing awareness of personal differences in the language classroom is one of the primary objectives in foreign language learning and teaching today. Knowledge about the student profile provides advantages for the language learner and the teacher in meeting goals and objectives (Erton, 2010). Learner characteristics are essential for success in language learning and need to be evaluated with regard to their interaction with specific environmental factors or conditions (Dörnyei, 2009 in Gan, 2011). Thus, individual features need to be studied to develop strategies for learning and teaching purposes and create a more fruitful learning and teaching environment in order to increase academic performance (Erton, 2010).

Awareness of the importance of individual differences in languages has made second language acquisition researchers focus on this field. Early research studies analysed the strategies used by successful language learners in order to increase their success. The study conducted by Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) revealed five significant strategies used by good adult language learners: taking an active approach to the task of language learning; recognising and exploiting the systematic nature of

language; using the language they were learning for communication and interaction; managing their own affective difficulties with language learning, and monitoring their language learning performance (Oxford and Lee, 2008 in Gan, 2011). Finally, as suggested by Titone (1966):

> making teaching specific for the individual meant giving a higher value and greater consideration to the individual resources and needs of the student (Titone, 1966 in Torresan, 2010: 9).

1.1 What are Individual Differences?

People are not homogeneous: they posses different characteristics that are unique for every individual and that make them different from each other. According to Dörnyei (2005), individual differences are "characteristics or traits because of which individuals differ from each other" (Dörnyei, 2005: 1-2 in Chowdhury, 2010: 3) and are assumed to apply to everybody (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012: 639).

Individual differences affect the acquisition of a second language, they support or hinder the learning process. Thus, success of a second language learning varies greatly from individual to individual*:* learners differ greatly in their aptitudes for learning, their willingness to learn, the styles of learning, in what they do in learning and in any particular learning situation. For example,

> extroverted learners who interact without inhibition in their second language learning become more successful than the learners who are more introverted and do not interact that much willingly (Chowdury, 2010: 4).

That is, these learner traits determine to some degree if and how well any individual is able to learn, which implies different ways of thinking that are correlated to learning outcomes (Jonassen and Grabowski, 2011).

The discipline which studies individual differences is the branch of psychology called 'differential' or 'correlational' psychology. The term 'correlational' refers to the

individual differences in second language learning which have produced the most consistent predictors of second language learning success (Dornyei and Skehan, 2008). Thus, this discipline studies the way people differ from one another. The method used is that of spotting a feature and relating this to other variables. In order to do so, it is essential to design measuring instruments which give a score on the particular trait. However, a subject's personal characteristics cannot be manipulated and all psychologists can do is to use correlational designs; each person is indeed unique and is more than the combination of numerous but separate traits. Individuals cannot be categorised into 'little boxes': they are like others in some factors, they can share some group-related factors, but they can differ in behaviour and ways of living.

The problem scholars have always had is to understand what different learners bring psychologically to the learning situation that faces them. A key starting point was the conference on learning and individual differences held in 1965 at the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh (LRDC Conference). Here Glaser and Cronbach reached the same conclusion regarding next steps for psychological research, although had different perspectives and emphases. They found out that aptitude refers to properties of the initial states of persons and it influences learning in particular situations. It was possible to study the interaction between aptitude and learning by manipulating treatment situations (Ackerman, Sternberg, Glaser, 1989).

Regarding the correlation between individual differences and language learning, consensuses on set of such influences that vary from one learner to another and differ according to a learner's inner characteristics has not been reached yet. Liao (1996) has individualised the cognitive factors: intelligence, aptitude and language learning strategies (Eddy, 2011). Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), Lightbown and Spada (1999), Lujan-Ortega have pinpointed factors such as age, motivation, intelligence, attitude, personality, cognitive style and learning strategy, to be

important in second language learning (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011 and Eddy, 2011). Shekan has suggested four main areas: language aptitude, learning style, motivation and learning strategies, adding then that also personality is relevant, as proposed by Dewaele and Furnham (1999). A similar approach can be found in Ellis (1985) who believes that age, aptitude, cognitive style, motivation and personality are factors that contribute to individual learner differences (Eddy, 2011). Intelligence, aptitude, cognitive and learning styles, learning strategies, features of personality, motivation, sex, age and social factors are of determinate importance for most of the authors (Eddy, 2011) and thus in the following sub-chapters they are presented in more detail. They can be grouped in cognitive, affective, physiological and social categories (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011). It is important to note that all the individual differences are intricately interlocked with each other and all need to be taken into consideration when dealing with second language acquisition (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

This uniqueness of individual mind has been explored by psychologists from the early days, but individual difference research has been an area of neglect and has not been well enough analysed in mainstream second language acquisition studies (Skehan, 1989). Recently there has been a growing interest in individual differences and researchers have found out a considerable number of features which influence the results of second language learning processes. In the late 19th century, studies focused on the interrelations of variables in cognitive, affective and social domains. Topics such as human metal ability, personality features, communication styles and strategies were analysed and research led to a new learner-centred emphasis (Fonseca, 2005). However, the study of individual differences in language learning still needs further research; some personality traits have not been yet sufficiently explored leading research to inconclusive results (Fonseca, 2005).

1.2 Cognitive factors in learning language

In recent years theoretical perspectives on the nature of the relevant cognitive abilities for language learning have progressed considerably. They are said to facilitate learning by making for the smooth transmission of learned materials. Cognitive factors are not distinct traits or identified elements, and this implies the impossibility to directly observe and measure qualities, such as motivation, intelligence, aptitude and so on (Sánchez, 2012). They are usually measured as combinations of subtests scores, whose results do not represent the measures in their complexity, but describe different sets of behavioural traits. Common-factor studies have tried to identify the single abilities but it has been found that some variables function together as a unit. The evidence of a simple-structure common factors indicates the correlation between different capacities and abilities, which appears to be organised in functions. These abilities represent conjunctive concepts: they are based on the conjunction of several indicators (Norton and Toohet, 2011).

In the following sections, intelligence, language aptitude, cognitive and learning styles, and learning strategies are briefly discussed.

1.2.1 Intelligence

Intelligence is a difficult concept to define. For many, the term 'intelligence' is a synonym for cognitive abilities and it should be the basis for making most decisions in which evaluations of human differences in cognitive abilities are relevant (Ackerman, Sternberg and Glaser, 1989). Many studies have been conducted on intelligence. Some analysed the general structure of intelligence, which still remains a considerable debate in the literature. Spearman (1927) proposed the general factor of intelligence; Thurstone (1938) suggested a number of primary mental abilities. Others have distinguished between fluid intelligence and crystallised intelligence (Cattell, 1987), or

between various components (Sternberg, 1991), or between seven intelligences (Gardner, 1985). Some described intelligence through some theoretical models: the complexity, the psychometric and the information processing model (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993; Furnham et al., 1999).

The primary intent of the complexity model is to convey the complexity of the concept; it includes Gardner's *multiple intelligences* and Sternberg's *metaphors of mind.*

According to Gardner (1993), intelligence is a complex of abilities and skills that are presented in all individuals in different ways. He and his colleagues have found seven intelligences:

3. Logical-mathematical intelligence. Logical and numerical patterns, abstractions, deductive reasoning and numbers are involved in this kind of intelligence.
4. Linguistic intelligence. It involves the ability to communicate by knowing many words and assembling them. People with this kind of intelligence are usually good at reading, writing and telling stories.
5. Musical intelligence. This area has to do with rhythm, pitch and melody. People with this kind of intelligence usually learn and memorise things faster by using songs.
6. Spatial intelligence. People with this intelligence have the ability to visualise with the mind's eye. It is about a form or object.
7. Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence. It includes the ability to control body movements and proprioceptive abilities. Furthermore, this involves a sense of timing and a clear sense of the goal of a physical action. Activities dealing with muscular movements help students to learn better.
8. Interpersonal intelligence. This involves understanding and dealing with moods, temperaments, motivations, behaviours of other people are all

features involved in this intelligence. Thus it is all about interaction with others.

9. Intra-personal intelligence. This area includes the understanding of one's own feelings and guiding one's own behaviour. It comprehends the ability of predicting your own reactions and emotions.
10. Naturalistic intelligence. It deals with species and other aspects of environment. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2003).

This theory can explain how well we learn different skills and choose different career paths. Regarding the acquisition of a foreign language, it is best understood as consisting of students' strengths and weaknesses in learning: different perspectives to approach foreign language learning may follow the multiple intelligence patterns (Viskari, 2005). Fonseca and Arnold (2002) and Fonseca (2005), for example, have applied this theory to the language classroom, finding that

> a multiple intelligence perspective in the foreign language classroom is a framework that can help language teachers to recognise the holistic nature of learners and to address student diversity. It enables teachers to organise a variety of contexts that offer learners distinct ways to engage meaning and strengthen memory pathways; it is a teacher-friendly tool for lesson planning that can increase the attractiveness of language learning tasks and therefore create favourable motivational conditions (Arnold and Fonseca, 2004 in Fonseca, 2005: 17).

The studies of Fonseca (2005) made it possible to propose various language activities according to the different intelligences. They are presented in the following table (Table 1).

Intelligences	Definitions	Examples of Activities for the FL classroom
A. Musical-rhythmic	Ability to perceive and appreciate rhythm, pitch and melody	Songs, chants, rhymes, voice games, instrumental background music
B. Verbal-linguistic	The ability to use oral and written	Story-telling, debates,

	language effectively and creatively	discussions, jokes, readings
C. Visual-spatial	The ability to represent the spatial world internally in your mind	Mind-maps, images, puzzles
D. Naturalist	The ability to discriminate among living things, as well as to have sensitivity towards the natural world	Excursions, out-door activities, activities to do with ecology
E. Bodily-kinaesthetic	Ability to use the body to express oneself, to handle physical objects dexterously	Drama, mimicry, games, role-plays
F. Interpersonal	The ability to understand other people, to work co-operatively and to communicate, verbally and non-verbally, with others.	Co-operative tasks, pair-work
G. Intrapersonal	The ability to understand the internal aspects of the self and to practise self-discipline	Visualisations, metacognitive tasks
H. Logical-mathematical	The ability to use numbers effectively, to recognise abstract patterns, to discern relationships and to reason well	Reasoning activities, finding causes and effects

Table 1 - Multiple Intelligences in the FL classroom (in Fonseca, 2005: 17)

Unlike Gardner, Sternberg (1990) reviewed different interpretations of intelligent behaviour in each individual. He proposed seven metaphors:

1. Geographic metaphor. It involves the mapping of mind and the understanding of intelligences.
2. Computational metaphor. People with this intelligent behaviour have a mind like a computing device which processes underlying intelligence.
3. Biological metaphor. It includes the electro-physiological and biochemical functions of the brain and central nervous system.
4. Epistemological metaphor. It focuses on equilibration for knowledge acquisition and developmental periods of growth.
5. Anthropological metaphor. The intelligence is seen as a cultural intervention

which adapts to any cultural influences.

6. Sociological metaphor. It examines how social pressures in development are internalised
7. Systems metaphor. The mind is considered a network of different intelligences and combinations of different metaphors (Sternberg, 1990).

Unlike the complexity model, the psychometric one describes a variety of landscapes of human ability. This model has been formed by empirical, psychological research on individual differences. It includes three types of intelligence: general, secondary and primary abilities. This model is very useful for learning and instruction: it can be the basis for many of the individual differences and for most types of achievement and aptitude testing (Cianciolo and Sternberg, 2004).

Finally, the information processing model of intelligence is based on information-processing theories that define intelligent behaviour as a series of computations. Also in this model, it is possible to identify two types: problem-solving and componential analysis.

Agreeing with the above quoted theoretical models, we could argue that intelligence is the aggregation of “the mental abilities that an individual possesses and can use in accomplishing learning outcomes and interacting with instruction” (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993: 50). Scientists agree in saying that the ability to think or reason is of particular importance for intelligence.

There have been many attempts to find a way to measure intelligence. One of the first psychologists who devised a proper measure of intelligence (1905) was the Frenchman Alfred Binet, who was asked to devise a test in order to identify mentally retarded children at a young age as possible so that they could be given special educational facilities (Eysenck, 1994). Intelligence tests have been revised and improved to become more accurate, reliable and valid, although one could argue that the environment has also an influence on intelligence. Students' performances on

reading and language usage tests are strongly linked with their level of intelligence: researchers agree that students with high score in intelligence tests do better on tasks that test learners' knowledge of the language and its usage (Chowdhury, 2010). The relationship between intelligence and second language acquisition was highlighted by the survey conducted by Genesee (1976), who found that while intelligence correlated with some skills associated with SLA, especially with those used in reading, writing, language analysis and vocabulary study (Femandez-Corugedo, 1999 in Chowdhury, 2010), its influence is less strong in the acquisition of oral fluency: “when it comes to the development of the learners' communicative competence intelligence does not play any role on it” (Chowdhury, 2010: 9).

In the field of second language acquisition, the term intelligence was often associated to the one of foreign language aptitude, although efforts to label intelligence as something else only led to confusion (Teepen, 2004). The relationship between intelligence and aptitude has been analysed by researchers, in particular by Wesche, Edwards and Wells (1982), and although there are significant correlations between intelligence and aptitude, there is also a considerable degree of independence (Skehan, 1989). While aptitude refers to a specific area of performance, intelligence has a broader meaning and includes all areas of learning. However, both terms are synonymous and the differences in meaning are minor in detail (Dorney, 2005 in Kocic, 2010).

1.2.2 Language Aptitude

Language learning aptitude has been defined as the combination of specific abilities which are useful in order to predict success in language learning (Dornyei, 2005 in Kocić, 2010). It is an 'umbrella-term' for a set of specific cognitive skills and capacities, such as *working memory* or *phonological coding/ decoding* and has a major

significance for the rate of language learning.

In order to respond to institutional and educational concerns (such as selection of people best able to learn languages, diagnosis relating strengths and weaknesses in the abilities in order to contribute to language learning), researchers created the first tests of language-learning aptitude which developed at about the same time as the development of general intelligence tests (Chapelle, 2013). The most well known battery of all is the Modern Languages Aptitude Test (MLAT), which was designed by the American psychologist Carroll in the 1950s and still used widely in SLA research into aptitude today (Chapelle, 2013). Carroll was the one who gave a 'modern' approach to foreign language aptitude in 1950s, defining

> foreign language aptitude as a stable cognitive characteristic of those individuals who have a knack or talent for learning other languages (in Griffiths, 2012: 142).

Analysing his data obtained from this test, he put forward the 'four component' view of language aptitude: phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language learning ability and rote learning activity for foreign language materials (Krashen, 1981). A few years later, Pimsleur (1966) developed the Language Aptitude Battery (LAB). Subsequently, further attempts for devising linguistic aptitude tests were made (especially for military purposes) but the Carroll and Pimsleur tests have remained the most recognised tests for measuring foreign language aptitude (Sparks and Ganschow, 1996 and Chapelle, 2013).

Since the publication of the aptitude batteries, there has been a great deal of SLA research (Ellis, 2008), but the initial interest slowly began to fade due to the development of communicative approaches to language teaching. One of the few isolated attempts at research of aptitude is the one of Skehan (1989) who has proposed two different profiles of language aptitude: individuals with the analytic

aptitude, who achieve success through organising and structuring material; and individuals with a more memory-oriented aptitude, who rely on memory without much analysis (Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

However, in the last few years researchers began to take into consideration this field again, proposing new concepts and ideas of aptitude. The possible relationship between aptitude and the acquisition of a second language was studied by Dornyei and Skehan (2003): if we accept the fact that a critical period for second language learning exists, aptitude may well be a combination of individual differences with which learners are able to focus on (Dornyei and Skehan, 2003). Instead, Robinson examined the various aptitude factors and found that their combinations significantly contribute to learning processes (Chapelle, 2013). In 2000, Grigorenko, Sternberg and Ehrman (2000) published a new L2 aptitude test called the Cognitive Ability for Novelty in Acquisition of Language as applied to foreign language test (CANAL-FT). The test is based on Sternberg's theory of intelligences and was designed to measure people's ability to deal with novelty in their learning (Olivares-Cuhat, 2010). Aptitude test scores are important to enhance teaching materials and techniques, so all students have the opportunity to receive better instruction (Chapelle, 2013).

1.2.3 Cognitive and Learning Styles

The term 'learning style' was first used by Thelen (1954) when discussing group dynamics, although Allport (1937) proposed the term 'cognitive style' to mean a person's usual mode of thinking and "way of living and adapting modulated by personality" (Ehrman et al., 2003: 314). For Brown (2000), cognitive style refers to a relatively stable trait of an individual which is linked to the personality (Cook, 2001)[2]; it is a fixed characteristic and has a great impact on the learning process. It needs to

[2] http://languagelearningandteaching.blogspot.it/2008/07/cognitive-styles.html

be taken into consideration in order to avoid possible conflicts, enhance classroom relations and increase classroom efficiency by offering “a myriad of multisensory, abstract and concrete learning activities that meet the needs of many different learning styles” (Oxford et al., 1992: 452).

Cognitive style is often associated with learning style, personality type and sensory preferences, causing confusion about the meaning of the terms (Ehrman et al., 2003). While some researchers argue that cognitive styles differ from the learning styles, such as Messick (1976) who argues that

> cognitive style is a general mode of processing information and individuals' learning styles are simply the cognitive styles exhibit when confronted with a learning task (Messick, 1976 in Cleeton, 2000: 52);

others do not find any differences between them e.g. Entwistle (1981 in Cleeton, 2000).

In order to simplify the concepts of cognitive and learning styles, Reid (1995) presented a categorical framework of learning styles, dividing them into three major groups: cognitive, sensory and personality learning styles (Kasim et al., 2012). In the cognitive learning styles, Witkin (1973) described two types of learning styles: the field independent style (left brain dominance) and the field dependent style (right brain dominance). A field independent learner is usually an independent and confident being; a learner with a field dependent style is usually a sociable individual where communication and interaction help in second language acquisition (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). Sensory learning styles may be divided into two subgroups: perceptual styles (auditory learner, visual learner, tactile learner, kinaesthetic learner, and haptic learner) and environment styles (physical and sociological learner). Finally, the personality learning styles comprehend extroversion vs. introversion; sensing vs. perception; thinking vs. feeling; judging vs. perceiving; ambiguity-tolerant vs. ambiguity-intolerant (Kasim et al., 2012).

What is important for our discussion is the language learning style defined as cognitive variations in learning a second language. Different authors have given different definitions of learning style, but the conclusion that they reached was that if individuals know what their own learning styles are and what characteristics these styles have, they can acquire increasing amount of information without the need for assistance of others (Kazu, 2009). It is an individual preferred way of processing and recalling information linked to language learning (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

Learning styles have a great impact on the processes of education and learning: the interests and successes of students increase significantly if lessons are taught by considering the individual's learning styles. However, Brown (2000) argues that their role has not been understood yet as the interaction with specific second language and learning context is complex (Pourhossein Gilakjani, 2012).

Knowles (1972) identified four different learning styles (Schmeck, 1988 and Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012):

1. *Concrete learning style*: learners are curious, spontaneous and willing to take risk. They use active and direct means of processing information;
2. *Analytical style*: learners are autonomous, serious, push themselves hard and are vulnerable to failure. They prefer a systematic presentation with instructions to follow up in their own;
3. *Communicative learning style*: learners prefer a social approach to learning. They learn well from discussion and group activities: interaction is essential for these learners;
4. *Authority/Oriented learning style*: learners are responsible and dependable. They like to be instructed and to know exactly what they are doing.

However, in the research literature more than twenty learning style dimensions have been identified. The most well known division is between visual, auditory and tactile/kinaesthetic learners. One survey of the early 21st century shows a preference

(85 per cent) in learning through the kinaesthetic channel (Moilanen 2002: 27–28 in Viskari, 2005), but studies have suggested a negative correlation between this learning style and foreign language acquisition (Arjanko and Koukkula, 1998; Bailey et al. 2000 in Viskari, 2005). Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the types of learning styles are not dichotomous (Oxford, 2003).

To conclude, preferences, characteristics and differences are central in learning styles which may affect the process of language learning and influence the way learners react to classroom instruction; as personalities change, "learning style preferences may also change after exposure to different learning situations" (DeCapua and Wintergerst, 2005 in Viskari, 2005: 60).

1.2.4 Learning Strategies

Every individual uses a set of learning strategies that agree with their personality traits. Learning strategies have been used throughout time in order to help students to learn tasks in a more efficient way and have better language learning performance. It is not easy to give a general definition of this term as many definitions have been used to define learning strategies. According to Ally and Deshler (1979), learning strategies are "the tools and techniques used by the learner in the understanding and learning of new materials or skills" (Cleeton, 2000: 1); they are a way of facilitating learning, aiding problem solving and accomplishing any task undertaken by the learner. Learning strategies can make learning more enjoyable, more effective and easier when they relate well to L2 task at hand and when they fit the particular student's learning style preferences (Ehrman et al., 2003).

Learning strategies are often interrelated with learning styles; studies have shown that style has a great impact on the choice of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). For example, Brown (1996) argues that

> learning strategies do not operate by themselves, but rather are directly tied to the learner's underlying learning styles (i.e. general approaches to learning) and other personality-related variables (such as anxiety and self-concept) in the learner (Brown, 1996 in Sadeghi et al., 2012: 118).

Similarly, Schmeck (1988) believes that learning styles are linked to learning strategies which both need to be observed in the context of general personality factors (Sadeghi et al., 2012). However, while learning styles characterise the consistent features, tendencies or preferences which make people different from one another, learning strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

The study of language learning strategies was taken up by a number of scholars in the 1980s. In 1987, Wenden and Rubin analysed learning strategies underlining the importance of this concept in the acquisition of a second language and in the achievement and proficiency (Pressley et al., 1990 in Ehrman et al., 2003).

Several learning strategies have been proposed in the last three decades; the taxonomy of Weinstein and her associates is one of the early ones and is represented by the LASSI questionnaire. Around the same time, Oxford (1990) developed her Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). She considered learning strategies as:

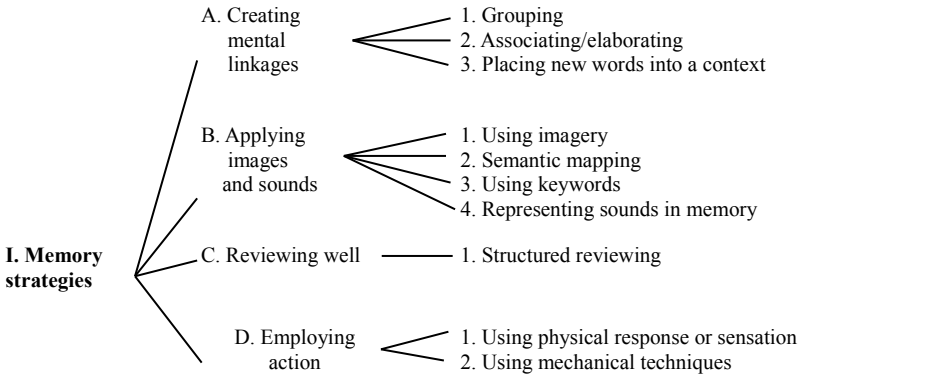
> specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques – such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task – used by students to enhance their own learning (Oxford, 1990 in Scarcella and Oxford, 1992: 63).

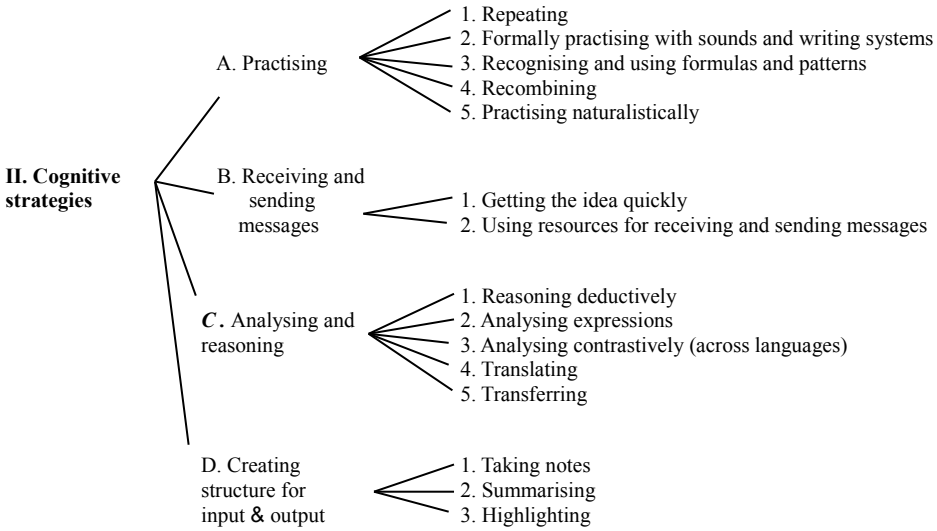
She divided the L2 learning strategies into six categories (Oxford, 1990 in Ehrman et al., 2003; Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012) (see Figure 1 for a summary):

- Memory-related strategies. They enable the learner to link concepts of a foreign language with another without necessarily understanding them.

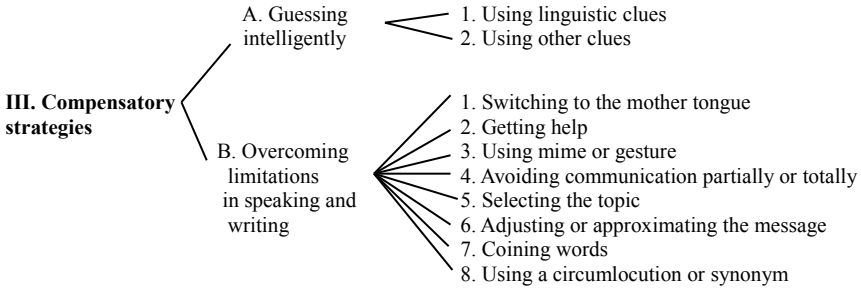
Various strategies have been suggested in order to help learners to memorise quickly, such us using the sounds, images, body movement, mechanical means and/or location;

- Cognitive strategies. They enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways. Some of these strategies are: repetition, resourcing, directed physical response, translation, grouping, not-taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualisation, elaboration, transfer, inferencing, question for clarification;
- Compensatory strategies. They help the student to make up for missing knowledge;
- Metacognitive strategies. They are employed for managing the learning process overall; the skills are used for planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning activities. Some of the strategies of this category are: advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, advance preparation, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement;
- Affective strategies. They enable the learner to identify his/her feelings, level of anxiety, self-esteem;
- Social strategies. They enable the learner to acquire knowledge of the language and its culture.


I. Memory strategies
A. Creating mental linkages
1. Grouping
2. Associating/elaborating
3. Placing new words into a context
B. Applying images and sounds
1. Using imagery
2. Semantic mapping
3. Using keywords
4. Representing sounds in memory
C. Reviewing well
1. Structured reviewing
D. Employing action
1. Using physical response or sensation
2. Using mechanical techniques


II. Cognitive strategies
A. Practising
1. Repeating
2. Formally practising with sounds and writing systems
3. Recognising and using formulas and patterns
4. Recombining
5. Practising naturalistically
B. Receiving and sending messages
1. Getting the idea quickly
2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages
C. Analysing and reasoning
1. Reasoning deductively
2. Analysing expressions
3. Analysing contrastively (across languages)
4. Translating
5. Transferring
D. Creating structure for input & output
1. Taking notes
2. Summarising
3. Highlighting

.


III. Compensatory strategies
A. Guessing intelligently
1. Using linguistic clues
2. Using other clues
B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing
1. Switching to the mother tongue
2. Getting help
3. Using mime or gesture
4. Avoiding communication partially or totally
5. Selecting the topic
6. Adjusting or approximating the message
7. Coining words
8. Using a circumlocution or synonym

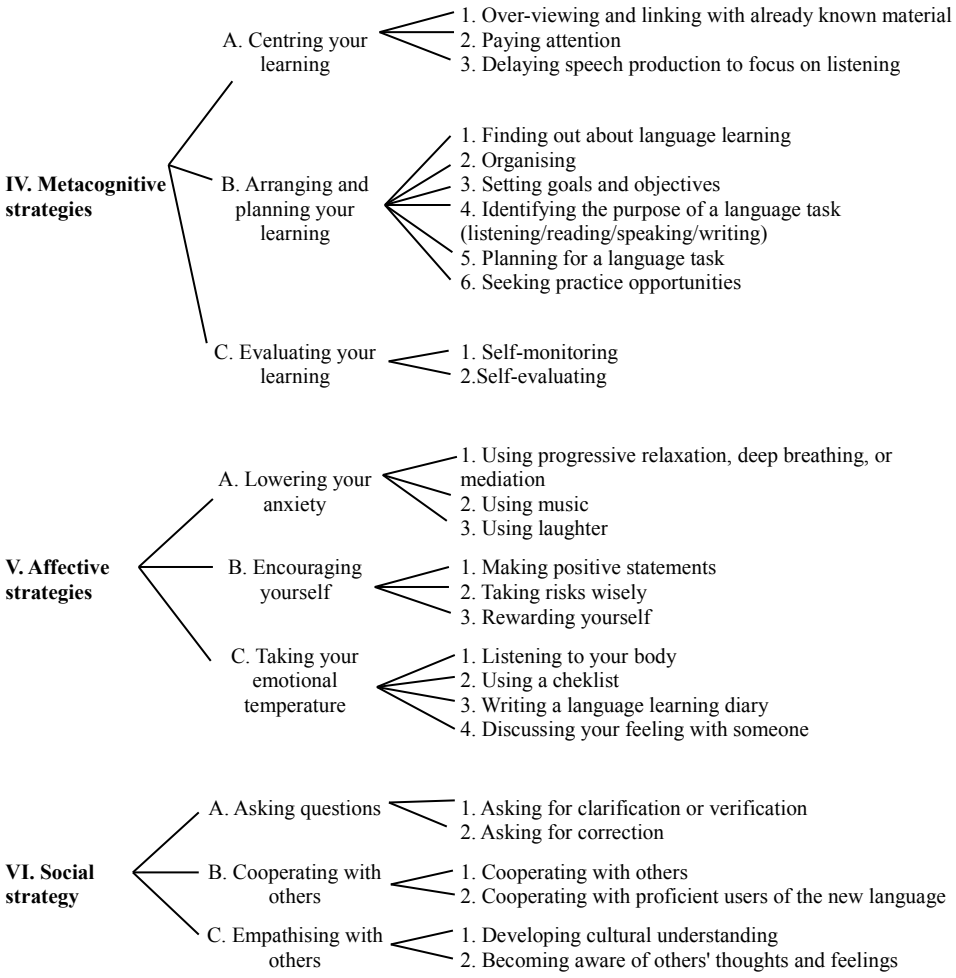


Figure 1 – Oxford's Strategy Classification System (Ehrman and Oxford, 1990)

Alternative classifications have subsequently been offered by others, and some of them raised further questions. However, it is possible to end up with three main categories of learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies (Skehan, 1989). While the cognitive and the metacognitives strategies correspond to the ones described by Oxford, the social-affective ones involve the interaction with another individual to assist a learning task. They comprehend Questioning for Clarification, Cooperation and Self-talk (Malley and Chamot, 1990).

To put it simply:

> personality traits are expressed in learning styles, that learning styles are reflected in learning strategies, and that learning strategies are manifest in learning tactics, which in turn produce a likely outcome (Schmeck in Sadeghi at al., 2012: 119).

It is important that language teachers understand their student learning styles; as Griggs (1991) argues:

> Everyone has a learning style. Our style of learning, if accommodated, can result in improved attitudes toward learning and an increase in productivity, academic achievement, and creativity (Griggs, 1991 in Erton, 2010: 116).

1.3 Affective factors in learning language

In recent years interest in affective factors among teachers, linguists and researchers has increased and it has become a matter of debate and extensive research. The adjective 'affective' refers to the emotional side of human behaviour, which makes individuals become aware of their environment, respond to it with feelings, and act according to them (Corredera Martos, 2006).

Affective variables are emotional factors which influence learning; Sideridis et al. (2006) noted that they play an important role on academic performance and in second language learning (Manchon, 2009 and Mee Bell and McCallum, 2012). However, they have not been adequately investigated in the study of second language acquisition (Brown, 2006).

The following sections present research findings related to foreign/second language learning and the affective personality traits: self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking,

anxiety, extroversion/introversion and motivation.

1.3.1 Personality

Personality has been a subject of curiosity among individuals and is perhaps the broadest dimension of individual differences (Jonassen and Grabowski, 2011). It has been defined in several ways in the history of psychology, such as Freud's ego, id, and super ego. According to the majority of theorists, the term 'personality' should refer only to emotional and motivational factors, while according to others it could include intelligence (Eysenck, 1994). Other definitions are sociocultural and descriptive. However, Sadeghi in her article well sums up the meaning of personality:

> as a dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by every person that distinctively and uniquely influences his or her behaviors, motivations, and cognitions in various situations. (Sadeghi, 2012: 118)

Probably, the oldest approach to the identification of personality is the partition of it into various types based on individual features. In his era, Aristotle and his contemporaries studied the 'humors', four basic bodily fluids which controlled a person's temperament, mood, or general disposition. During the 1990s, researchers such as Cattell and Eysenck distinguished personality types using factor analysis (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993).

Over the years many factor theories have been proposed. The two theories which have had particularly success are the ones of Cattell and Eysenck whose factor-analytic approaches are the best known in the field of personality (Eysenck, 1994). Of particular importance is the work of Normann (1963) who found five personality factors: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and culture. Also Miller (1988-1991) developed the model of personality. He divided

personality into three dimensions: cognitive, affective and conative. The first one stresses the importance of intellectual functions for the personality; the affective relates to the pervasive personality traits which are combined into a dimension of intense emotional reactions to life. The last one, the conative dimension, describes the conscious motivational aspects of personality rather unconscious drive states or behavioural response tendencies that are popular in social learning and personality theory. Linking the cognitive and conative dimensions, Miller classified four distinct personality varieties: personality types: reductionist, schematic, romantic. Each category makes individuals differ in the perception of themselves and of the world: our personality depends not only on what we have inherited, but also on environmental factors and on expected and actual behaviour and attitudes of other people towards us. Thus, different types of learning and and different instructional techniques are needed for the different personality types (Jonassen and Grabowski, 2012).

In the late 20th century, researchers focused on the link between personality traits and the language learning process. As Stevick (1980) argues, success in language learning depends on personality and on the interaction with the other students in the classroom (Fonseca Mora, 2005). Psychological factors, such as anxiety, inhibition, extroversion/introversion, risk-taking and self-esteem influence language learning process, but it is not easy to find out how and why they hinder or foster it (Fonseca Mora, 2005).

1.3.2 Self-Esteem

James (1890), White (1959), Coopersmith (1959-1967), Rosenberg (1965) and (1979), Branden (1969-1994), and Mruk (1999-2006) have been the main contributors to the development of the theoretical concept of self-esteem. Their definitions are based on

six major components of self-esteem: competence and worthiness, cognition and affect, stability and openness (Rubio, 2007). In general, self-esteem is considered the most pervasive of human characteristics that influences people in the way they do things (Zhang and Baumeister, 2006 in Brown, 2009). The sense of self-esteem in individuals develops according to the information they receive about themselves from others.

Brown (2000) individualised three levels of self-esteem: global, situational and task self-esteem (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). The first one is a stable quality within an individual; the situational self-esteem is the assessment of an ability in a particular situation; and the task self-esteem refers to specific activities (writing, reading, speaking, ...) and to the self-evaluation of a particular aspect of the process (Brown, 2007 in Zare and Riasati, 2012).

Various scholars have analysed self-esteem regarding language learning and acquisition showing that students who feel good about themselves are more likely to succeed in foreign language learning. In the context of language learning, low self-esteem creates insecurity, fear, social distance, and can have serious consequences: students may feel insecure and leave the classrooms, they may avoid taking the necessary risks to acquire communicative competence in the target language (Rubio, 2007). In various researches, it appeared that in the foreign language classroom students with low self-esteem experience more unpleasant effects in comparison to those with high-esteem (Piechurska-Kuciel and Szymanska-Czaplak, 2013).

1.3.3 Inhibition

Inhibition is another personality type that has a great impact in the process of learning language. It is defined as the set of defences an individual builds to protect himself/herself. It is related to self-esteem in a logical relationship: the weaker the

self-esteem, the stronger the inhibition to protect the weak ego (Brown, 2007 in Edwards et al., 2012).

The presence of a language ego is considered to be a major obstacle in the process of second language achievement (Lightbown and Spada, 2003 in Basic, 2011). This ego inhibits the process of making mistakes, learning from those mistakes and a consequent improvement in the language skills.

Brown et al. (2000) have found that language teaching approaches in the last thirty years have changed and students are put in situations where they do not need to take risks, which are necessary for progress in language learning. In one of his studies, Guoira (1972) found that this personal characteristic is a negative force for second language pronunciation performance. In fact, learners who drank small amounts of alcohol did better on pronunciation tests that those who did not drink any. However, these results may relate to performance instead of learning (Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

1.3.4 Risk- taking

Risk-taking is the ability to face all results and risks regardless of embarrassment in language learning. It is one of the factors which plays an important role in learning a second language and it is a crucial interactive process to learn a language (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). Risk-taking is a personality dimension that refers to an individual's preferences for selecting high-payoff/low-probability or low-pay-off/high-probability alternatives. Numerous opportunities need to be taken by learners, who have to face the probability of failing for the opportunity to succeed (Jonassen and Grabowski, 2011).

According to Beebe (1983, in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012), some of the reasons that cause fear of risk-taking in schools could be: fear of failing the exam, of getting a bad

grade, of punishment, of a reproach from the teacher if we consider the classroom setting; fear of looking ridiculous, of frustration and fear of losing their identity in a normal outside-classroom context. Students who do not take risks may avoid beneficial learning experiences; hence teachers should manage to create a climate of acceptance and encourage students to join the activities and discover the target language (Dufeu, 1994 in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). However, risk-taking will not always yield positive results in second language learning.

Risk-taking is linked to the dimension of creativity. Individuals who present their ideas open themselves to the possibility of different judgments:

> in learning a new language, students are required to use their imaginations, seek alternatives, and produce original ideas (Richard, 2007: 6).

1.3.5 Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotional state of worry, nervousness and stress that many learners experience when they are learning a second language (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). It has been proved that there is a relationship between anxiety and performance, but it is very hard to define the connection as it is not linear. This factor is handled by individuals in different ways; stress caused by it cannot always be reduced by spending energies in educationally desirable ways (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993 in Viskari, 2005).

Three kinds of anxiety have been identified in recent studies: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. The first one is the inclination to be anxious and it denotes an anxiety that is a general personality trait; the second one is the type of anxiety which is experienced in certain situations and it varies depending on an event or combination of events; the situation-specific anxiety occurs consistently over time

in a given situation (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993).

Anxiety can play an important role in second language learning, overall when it interferes with the learning process (Arnold, 1999). Spielberg (1962) found that the influence of anxiety changes as a function of ability level: anxiety helps high-ability students to succeed, and in this case it is a facilitative anxiety, but it is linked with poor performance for low-ability students, named debilitation anxiety (Brown, 2000). Anxious students do not learn as quick as non-anxious learners because the first ones are focused on both the task at hand and their reactions. Hence, this factor may cause both negative and positive effects, which facilitate or inhibit cognitive actions (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). Recently the research has been amplified by Brown (2000) who found three more components of foreign language anxiety. They are: communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation and apprehension over academic evaluation.

However, according to MacIntyre and Gardner, (1991, in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012) anxiety does not influence second language achievement directly, but many features which are closely linked to anxiety such as ambiguity tolerance, frustration tolerance, locus of control, achievement and attitudes, intelligence, have on impact on the language success.

1.3.6 Extroversion -Introversion

The notions of extroversion and introversion originated from theories of personality which developed in psychology. They are considered the two personalities that mostly influence the ways of learning of students, show their different attitude toward the second language acquisition, and affect their thoughts and lives (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

Extroversion indicates thinking and behaviour that are directed outward; introversion

refers to thinking and behaviour that are directed inward or to oneself (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993). Extrovert learners usually make relationships with other people easily, they are sociable and can approach new situations quickly; introvert students instead are shy and show slow development of social skills (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). Henjum (1982) further divided the introverts into two groups: type A introverts are confident, hard-working, successful; type B introverts are shy, withdrawn and self conscious. Level of introversion and extroversion is relatively constant, but the context may influence thinking and behaviour. It has been found that introverts are easily stimulated and as a consequence they do not need an environment with lots of stimuli; contrarily, extroverts require more stimuli to generate a response[3].

The relationship between extroversion-introversion and learning has been studied for a long time by many SLA researchers whose majority agrees on saying that extroverts are better language learners compared to introverts. In fact, students with an extrovert personality are well suited to language acquisition: they increase the amount of input (Krashen, 1985), they prefer communicative approaches (Cook, 2001), they like to join groups and activities (McDonough, 1986) and as a result they increase their interaction in the language (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). However that may be, introverted students are better at developing cognitive academic language ability (Skehan, 1989). Furthermore, not all the researchers agree on that. Some have not found a significant difference between extroverts and introverts regarding the achievement of a second language. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) wrote:

> […] for academic achievement in general, introversion is usually the more desirable end of the trait dimension. But for language learning, the desirable end may be either extroversion or introversion, depending on the learning context and instructional methods (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996 in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012: 36).

[3] http://www.benziger.org/articlesIng/?p=30

Both introverted and extroverted students have their positive features. It is important to bear in mind that a pure personality does not exist. A person who is extremely introverted, may show extroverted behaviours in exceptional cases.

1.3.7 Motivation

Motivation has an important impact in the success of second and foreign language learning in general, especially in classroom language learning. It

> provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (Dörnyei, 1998 in Kaboody, 2013: 45).

It is a 'complex' and 'multifaceted construct' as general, education, social and cognitive psychology, as well as educational and social theories, and sociolinguistic theories have need to be considered for understanding motivation. In addition, neurobiological and physiological explanations are involved to define motivation. Hence, it has not been easy to define and study motivation. In the most general sense, motivation concerns the choice of a particular action, its persistence and its effort. In the simplest of the definitions, motivation explains why people decide to do something, how long they will do it and how hard they will pursue it (Dornyei and Skehan, 2008).

In linguistics, sociolinguistics and second language acquisition research, a number of language learner models have been proposed. The most well-known model is Gardner and McIntyre's socio-educational model (1992) which has been widely accepted in the language learning area. The model is concerned with the role of various individual differences in the learning of a second language. In the model the learner's level of motivation differentiates from integrity and attitudes; these three variables are said to form integrative motivation. Results show that elements of the integrative

motivation are significantly correlated with factors of language achievement (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Although it is clear that Gardner's theory has made a great contribution to this area, many studies calling for re-conceptualization of motivation have emerged. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) argued that Gardner's approach was limited in terms of the range of possible influences on motivation that exist. To a much greater extent that Crookes and Schmidt (1991), Dornyei (1994) recognised the important role that the social dimension of second language motivation plays and examined a wider variety of motivation variables. He developed a process-oriented model of motivation that consists of three phases: choice motivation, executive motivation and motivation retrospection (Kaboody, 2013). Also the works of Oxford and Shearin (1994) summarise a number of motivational variables which are related to language learning. Differently, other scholars analysed the correlation between motivation and emotion, concluding that the link is strong, intricate and fascinating (Robinson, 2002).

There are many factors which determine the motivational level of individual students. First, they need to believe that they can be successful in order to be motivated: positive expectations and self-efficacy are hence important for motivation. Secondly, it is important to consider how students see their success and failure in the classroom. The ones who attribute failure to a lack of ability lose the motivation. Goal setting is another aspect concerning motivation. Aims need to be realistic and reachable, otherwise their motivation will be lowered. Valence is also an important element, which "refers to the subjective value that an individual associates with a particular outcome" (Oxford and Shearin, 1994 in Viskary, 2005: 34).

1.4 Physiological factors in learning language

Gender, sex and age are two physiological factors which have been studied for a long time. On the whole, they seem to be factors that are important to explain foreign language learning as they both influence it (Viskari, 2005). They are presented below.

1.4.1 Sex and Gender

Sex and gender have been traditionally distinguished: while the first term refers to the biological category of male or female, the second one is related to the social and cultural norms and hence can change according to time and place (Catalan, 2003).

The two terms both influence the use of language and, while it is difficult to know which one is dominant in a particular context, it is more feasible to understand it in the field of second language acquisition in which they are considered individual differences. Sex can explain possible cognitive and strategic differences and gender is linked with affective factors on language learning (Catalan, 2003).

Several studies have found that gender influences the way students learn a language and significant gender differences may exist. It has been found that women show greater integrative motivation and a more positive attitudes to the foreign language, use more conscious strategies than men (Oxford, 1993), have better listening skills and an overall advantage in language-learning skills and as a consequence females are anatomically equipped to excel in languages (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). Results of many surveys suggest that the female superiority overtakes the male one in nearly all aspects of language learning, except listening vocabulary (Boyle, 1987 in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

1.4.2 Age

The relationship between age and second language acquisition is complex and controversial. While many may believe that children are better than adults at learning a second language, in reality this individual difference is a much less reliable prediction of second language success (Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

For several decades scholars have studied the differences between children's and adult's acquisition of languages and have developed the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), a biologically period of life in which it is easy to acquire a language (Brown, 2000 in Wagner, 2006). It is often claimed that the critical period ends somewhere around puberty, or even earlier. In addition, the conditions for language learning are often very different. Teenagers in informal language learning contexts usually have more time to devote to learning a language. They have more opportunities to hear and use the language, and do not feel pressure to speak the foreign language (Shakouri and Saligheh, 2012). Thus, young learners will speak fluently and accurately from the very beginning and mistakes will be accepted. Instead, older learners usually find themselves in a formal environment which demands more complex language and the expression of more complicated ideas. Adults are often embarrassed, they feel frustrated and are too scared to make mistakes. These feelings may affect risk-taking, motivation and willingness, rendering their abilities worse (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). However, this hypothesis has not been conclusively proven (or completely disproved) yet, also because the majority of studies have analysed the acquisition of language without distinguishing the first language from the second one. On the other hand, adult learners proceed through early stages of grammatical development faster than children (Viskari, 2005).

1.5 Social factors in learning language

Not much is known about social-emotional factors in learning languages as individual

social-emotional skills have rarely been investigated in terms of primary variables. They can affect motivation, attitudes and language learning success. One such factor is the social dynamic or power relationship between the languages which everybody is sensitive. (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Individual differences included in this category promote competent interactions with classmates and teachers, making the individual succeed, and also have considerable implications for a child's cognitive development and academic performance (Denham, 2006 and Raver, 2002 in Richard, 2007). Recently, the interest in social factors has led researchers to analyse the relationship people have with their own primary social group. The connection is intimate and so it follows that the link influences people's attitudes and behaviour, including language use and learning (Gatbonton et al., 2009 in Yates, 2011).

1.6 The Importance of Individual Differences

As we can see from the previous sub-chapters, individual differences are features that operate in foreign language learning processes and they are useful in order to enforce new methodological approaches in schools. Giving the learner the opportunity to bring into play his individual competences and skills, the successful learning process will take place, adding that an important role is played by teacher, who needs to know the learning processes of his students. As Vietor (1882) suggested more than a hundred years ago, foreign language teaching needs to change continuously and adapt its methodological concepts to the results of SLA research and of modern cognitive and constructivist theories (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011).

According to Wolff (2003) and Arabski and Wojtaszek (2011) at least six parameters need to be considered in order to take into account the individual differences of learners and their competence. They are: learning contents, learning aims, the

learning environment, social forms of learning and the evaluation of learning results. As shown in Arabski and Wojtaszek (2011), these parameters need to be changed in order to evaluate individual differences in a modern learning psychological criteria.

Starting with *learning content*, we can state that traditional language learning is usually based on textbooks, now enriched with CDs or DVDs, which have contents that may not always be interesting for the students. The authors of textbooks cannot know what students like or do not like, and hence it is important to represent the content in all its complexity so as to give learners the possibility to assimilate their individual knowledge with the knowledge to be acquired. It is more useful and helpful for students get the chance to choose and decide by themselves the materials they want to work with (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011).

Learning objectives, which are global learning aims, are also fixed in the traditional foreign language teaching. They can be found in textbooks and in the curricula which students choose to follow. In order to stimulate students, learning objectives should be convincing and credible: learners need to understand the importance of reaching those objectives for their own learning process and their own life (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011).

The *learning environment* is correlated to learning content and learning aims and is influenced by the activities offered in textbooks. Students do not feel responsible for anything as everything is chosen and decided by teachers. On the other hand, activities should be organised in such a way that what students have learnt can be useful and used in certain situations (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011).

Regarding *social forms of learning*, this refers to the teacher-learner interaction and the way discussions take place in the classrooms. In traditional teaching, the teacher controls discourse and directs the interaction in the way he/she wants. Consequently, students do not feel free to say and argue what they want. According to the modern learning psychological criteria, students should co-operate in classrooms, teachers

should not manipulate the discussions but instead guide them in their learning process (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011).

Traditional foreign language teaching is influenced by textbooks, which dominate all teaching and learning processes. However, pedagogical thinking is influenced by cognitive psychology, neurobiology, and the constructivist paradigm. Constructivist thinking has also had an impact on practical teaching and a new design of the classroom in such a way that individual learners can manage to use their individual differences is needed. However, this argument will be developed and analysed in the third chapter in which different strategies and methodologies will be presented.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that:

> individual learner differences do not play an important role in explaining the acquisition of a person's first language but SLA has dealt with them quite extensively (Arabski and Wojtaszek, 2011: 6).

This is possibly due to the fact that individual differences already exist in babies (cognitive psychologists agree in saying that a child cannot be considered a *tabula rasa* at birth) but they develop with time. According to the literature, individual features are dynamic and change depending on the interaction with the environment, which is perceived in different ways. Estimates of variability require substantial sample size, but this is generally not possible for studies of child language: limitations to the kind of information that can be obtained with parent report, limitations to the distinction between imitations and spontaneous speech, limitations about the phonological development or about the frequency with which children use particular vocabulary types. However, researchers managed to show that there are massive variations in rate of development for healthy, normal children in every area of early communication and language (Bates, 1995).

1.7 To what extent can we predict success in SLA considering Individual Differences?

“Foreign or second language acquisition is a highly complex process in which individual learners undergo unique integration of their knowledge of the target language and their first language” (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 189). As in all, it appears that some people learn more quickly than others, and so it is for languages. In foreign language classes, some students progress rapidly while others struggle and have difficulties in acquiring the language. Researchers have tried to identify what individual differences make students succeed and have tried to identify the general attributes of a 'good' language learner (Brown, 2009).

One of the first to examine the characteristics of successful learners was Rubin when in 1975 she published her seminal article. She identified aptitude, motivation, and opportunity as essential characteristics of good language learners and constructed a list of strategies used by successful learners which depend on factors, such as the task, the learning stage, the learner's age, the learning context, learning style, and cultural differences (Griffiths, 2012). Since Rubin's famous article was published, debate has raged and continues to this day. For example, Lightbown and Spada (2006) describe some of the characteristics which help a learner to be a good one. These have are said to be: willingness and accuracy of guessing; willingness to get a message across even if the language is not well-known; willingness to make mistakes; constantly looking for patterns in the language; analyses of one's own speech and the speech of others; willingness to enjoy grammar exercises, learning in childhood; average IQ; academic skills; self-image and confidence.

Furthermore, Griffiths (2012) tried to analyse various aspects of a good language learner. However,

> failure to reach consensus over even basic definitions has inhibited research initiatives and contributed to a 'theoretical muddle' which is overdue for 'clearing away' (Griffith, 2012: 2).

Before going on to analyse the relationship between individual differences and second language achievement, I believe it is important to discuss briefly the way researchers find it out. When they deal with variables, as in this case, the research is not easy and requires much attention and good interpretation. Researchers usually start by choosing group of learners and giving them a questionnaire to measure the type and degree of the feature, e.g. motivation. Subsequently, some kinds of assessment are used to test their proficiency in the second language. At the end, the questionnaire and test are both scored and, using a statistical procedure called 'correlation', it is possible to find out if there is a positively link between the two variables. If so, the research will then try to discover the kind of relationship there can be. Unfortunately, this procedure may cause some difficulties and problems. First of all, there may be the difficulty in establishing what language proficiency is and how it can be measured. Once defined and measured, there may be obstacles with variables, as some of them cannot be directly observed and also depend on each other. If one variable influences the other one, it does not follow that both are affected by something else entirely. Hence, in the example of motivation, researchers may conclude that learners with high motivation may be successful learners, but cannot prove that students become successful because of their motivation.

Research dealing with individual differences needs to bear in mind that social and educational settings may affect their studies. As Norton and Toohey (2001) have argued, language learners who have all the characteristics to be considered as such, may not be successful if he is “not able to gain access to social relationships in situations where they are perceived as valued partners in communication” (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 55). This may happen with immigrants and minority groups that are

often marginalised by social and educational practices. However, it is very hard to define the relationship between individual differences, social situations and success in second language learning. Educators are trying to find ways of helping learners with different characteristics to succeed in foreign languages, but dealing with the huge impact second language acquisition has led to confusion (Norton and Toohey, 2011).

1.8 Conclusion

From the previous sections, one can conclude that individual learner differences play an important role in the acquisition of a second language. At present, the scientific study of the role of these features in second language learning may not be very sophisticated but researchers keep working on it. The need to study the phenomenon in detail has to be fostered in order to focus on individual students and their individuality in a language learning situation. Hence, teachers must also be psychologists, who have to be able to approach students according to their individual features; teachers need to understand and grasp the individual differences of their students and change their teaching methodology regarding to their abilities. In this way, students will learn quicker and will be helped in the process of second language acquisition (Deguchi, 2012).

Chapter 2

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In the previous chapter, it was pointed out that there is much research on the different individual difference variables which all have an impact on foreign language learning. It was also suggested that these factors are often linked with one another; individuals with foreign language learning disabilities are likely to have problems in various areas and it is difficult to determine which difficulties appeared first and what is their casual link to one another.

Students with special educational needs (SEN) have been much studied for several years. As regards the UK which is the object of the present study, although the Department of Education decided to use a policy of inclusion for students with SEN, there have been many arguments in favour and against the reintroduction of this policy.

The field of SEN has a long history; it is perhaps more appropriately defined as:

> an explanatory construct that is used to explain notable differences in rates of pupil progress in relation to a benchmark or point of reference (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), 2008: 9).

Historically, this benchmark has been "'normal' human development within a medical model", but recently it has focused on:

> 'need' in order to identify any additional or different provision required to address the observable differences in pupil progress. (NASUWT, 2008: 9)

This definition is 'relative' and may be interpreted in different ways; a child may be considered to have special educational needs in one school or context, but may not in another (NASUWT, 2008).

This chapter thus seeks to clarify the concept of children with special educational needs and elucidate the different categories of SEN listed by the Department of Education. Finally, the various types of support for these children in UK schools are briefly presented.

2.1 Who are children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

The terminology *special educational needs* (SEN) was introduced more than three decades ago in the United Kingdom when a desire emerged to overcome the old term "handicapped children" and find a definition which included students with learning difficulties (Peterson and Hittie, 2010). As a consequence, problems in classifying students presented themselves: some students had more than one disability and difficulties in learning did not imply identifiable disability. Hence, learners could not be neatly categorised, also in view of the fact that a number of other factors, such as environment, society, family and emotional problems, are unrelated to disability but influence their abilities. According to Griggs and Walker (2008), for example, the most important predictor of academic success is family background arguing that

> children from low-income households […] are more likely to require

> remedial help or special educational needs assistance than their better-off peers (Griggs and Walker, 2008: 4).

Researchers reached the conclusion that it would be more productive to focus on a child's actual need for additional support, resources and special services instead of their disability (Westwood, 2011).

The term *special educational needs* is defined in the legislation of the *Code of Practise* in the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs as "a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made" (in Department of Education, 2006: 1). *Learning difficulty* is applied to students who may be of average or somewhat below average intelligence and/or have a disability that interferes with their use of everyday educational facilities. This is not to be confused with *learning disability* which is applied to students with a handicap or development delay (Westwood, 2011).

Having said this, it is important to bear in mind that a disability can be considered as such in one culture, but not in another. Hence, the impairments considered to be significantly disabling in each society depends on the estimates of the prevalence of SEN (Stakes and Hornby, 2000).

2.2 The main areas of Special Educational Needs

The term *special needs* deals with different aspects: cognitive and learning disabilities; social, emotional and behavioural qualities; communication and interaction; sensory, physical and medical conditions. These areas are in turn divided into specific SEN categories, which will be briefly described in the following sections. However, although the Department of Education recognised all these types in order to help schools and education prepare for data collection, we need to keep in mind that many

students may have more than one difficulty. In these cases, the primary need of the learner will be recorded, followed by the secondary needs (Department of Education, 2006).

2.2.1 Cognitive and learning difficulties

The SEN Code of Practice identifies *cognition and learning* as one of the areas of need.

The study of this area developed when it emerged that:

> the need to understand individual differences among children and adults who displayed *specific* deficits in spoken or written language while maintaining integrity in *general* intellectual functioning and to provide services to these students, who were not being adequately served by the general educational system (Lyon, 1996: 57).

Scholars focused their attention on the unexpected pattern of *general* strength and *specific* weakness and eventually developed this area, which applies to pupils who are seen to have a general or specific difficulty in academic learning, affecting their motor skills, information processing and memory creating problems of attention, memory, problem-solving, reasoning, transfer of learning, language or literacy. The issues mentioned above influence the strategies developed by an individual who does not learn in the same ways others learn and does not learn as

Cognitive and Learning difficulties
Dyslexia/SpLD (DYL)
Dyscalculia (DYC)
Dyspraxia/DCD (DCD
Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
Unspecified (U)

Table 1 - Cognitive and Learning Disabilities (DfE, 2006)

quickly a others (Davis and Florian, 2004). However, this does not imply that learners have an under-average intelligence level, but it means that they need alternative learning methods.

Learning disabilities are then divided into subcategories, as shown in the Table 1.

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder* (DMS), they are classified as learning disorders which are identified as reading disorder (i.e. dyslexia), mathematics disorder (i.e. dyscalculia), writing disorder (i.e. dysgraphia), and others not specified (Department of Education, 2006).

Learning difficulties can vary from a mild to a severe difficulty. While pupils with low attainment and moderate learning difficulties are educated in mainstream schools with a particular school setting, learners with severe learning difficulties find it very hard to understand, learn and remember new skills and in consequence will not be able to follow normal lessons[4]. Also, pupils with extreme difficulty in learning are likely to keep their deficit, manifest a number of social and behavioural deficits and get worse, while pupils with mild or moderate deficits can improve their abilities (Lyon, 1996) although the difficulties do not have a remedy and human beings with learning difficulties may cope with unique life-long challenges[5]. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, teaching can help develop strategies to support future achievement.

In order to find a winning strategy and methodology of teaching, many studies have been conducted. Researchers have carried out controlled experiments with specific approaches (such as training in 'mnemonics' or memory enhancing strategies) for pupils with learning difficulties (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 2000). However, the partial quality of the research literature, the lack of rigour and the difficulty in giving a definition of special educational needs did not persuade reviewers who still have many doubts about this subject (Norwich and Lewis, 2001). Also the classification

[4] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk
[5] http://www.goodtherapy.org

system is still not clear, hindering the identification of different types and the interrelationship between each category and the others.

2.2.2 Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

Children's special educational needs relate to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties mean that they may have impediments in forming social relationships and concentrating on work. They may have attitudes of isolation or discretion, hyperactivity and lack of concentration; they are disruptive and disturbing, and immature in social skills (Department of education and skills, 2001).

The difficulties can only be understood in the context in which they occur and consequently there are many categories which can be formulated. For the purpose of simplification, we can distinguish between two main 'groups' of children: one which refers to those who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and one in which pupils have attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD and ADD) (Department of Education, 2006).

Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties
SEBD
ADD/ADHD (ADD)

Table 2 - Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties (DfE, 2006)

The term SEBD is problematic because it is largely socially constructed and it covers a wide range of special educational needs. It describes young people whose behaviour is determined by a deep-seated emotional/psychiatric disturbance and also those who behave in a specific way due to outward circumstances (DfEE Circular 9/94). There may be various reactions and may involve crime, acts of violence, abuse substances, depression and self-harm (Cooper, 2001). This implies a major difficulty in relation to the inclusion with other students; teachers identified children with SEBD as the most difficult to integrate and a similar vision was reported

by other researchers, such as Avramidis, Croll and Moses (NASUWT, 2008).

Instead, the terms ADHA and ADD refers to students who are marked with inattention, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Because of their short concentration span, short-term memory disorders and higher impulsiveness (Marsh, 2009), they start to speak later with language skills deficit, such as problems with pronunciation, structure of sentences, stuttering, reading and also they have poor organization skills. For these reasons, they need fixed rules, timetable, breaks and they need to repeat things may times (Cave et al., 2009).

However, not only is the definition of this category broad, but so is the issue of causes and origins. The explanatory models range from medical to social and it is rather difficult to distinguish between real research, sound evidence, personal opinion or pseudo-science (NASUWT, 2008).

2.2.3 Communication and interaction difficulties

Communication and interaction is one of the areas of special needs which includes students who have strengths and difficulties in one, some or all of the areas of speech, language and communication (pupils whose first language is not English should not be recorded here). As all educational settings depend heavily on communication, either verbal and non-verbal, children with these disabilities may find school (and the world at large) a frustrating, confusing and frightening place. Hence, it is important to help them to continue to develop their linguistic competence in order to support 'thinking' in general as well as their communication (Department for education and skills, 2001).

Communication and Interaction difficulties
Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)
Autism (AUT)
Aspergers (ASP)

Table 3 – Communication and Interaction difficulties (DfE, 2006)

Their communication needs may be both diverse and complex and a wide variation in the terminology is used to refer to this group of children. Furthermore, much of the research literature diverges in the classifications of these disorders: some scholars consider students with severe learning difficulties (SLD) part of this area, while others consider SLD to be a section of an other area (Davis and Florian, 2004 and NASUWT, 2008)[6].

Communication and interaction difficulties can affect young people with speech and language delay/impairments/disorders, autistic spectrum disorders, hearing impairment and the disturbances may change over the time. For practical purpose, children's communication needs are divided into three main groups: speech and language difficulties (SL), autism (AUT) and aspergers (ASP), as shown in Table 3.

Students with SL may have specific language impairment and for some this is a developmental delay: a child's language is developing but more slowly than usual. This may be due to poor listening and attention skills and with appropriate intervention, these pupils can catch up with their peers. For others, the difficulty is more complex: they may have difficulty in understanding and/or making others understand what they want to say; they may have a sever stammer and problems with construction and articulation; they may use words incorrectly and have a reduced vocabulary (Department of Education, 2006). However, things get more complicated when dealing with autistic children and with the ones with aspergers. They both have three particular areas of difficulty: an impairment in social interaction, in social communication and in imaginative and flexible thinking.

Students with autism have difficulty in understanding communication and social behaviour, and their thinking and behaving flexibly are restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities. Also many of them are delayed in learning to speak, while some

[6] I decided to classify the difficulties as they are presented in the Special Educational Needs – Code of Practice because it "sets out a framework for effective school based support with less paper work for teachers and an emphasis on monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs towards identified goals" (Preface).

of them are not able to structure a speech. They may have other disabilities, may have different perceptions of the six senses and may respond to stress and anxiety which are caused by new situations and contexts with inappropriate behaviour[7].

Pupils with asperger's syndrome experience similar impairments to those described under autism. The difference is that these young people have higher intellectual abilities, their language development is stronger than the one of autistic children and are more able to function independently[8].

2.2.4 Sensory difficulties

The umbrella term *sensory* is used to cover a wide variety of difficulties and indeed the children are varied in their educational needs. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment trough to lesser levels of loss which sometimes can be temporary. In this last case, children can attend mainstream classes with a little adaptation by teachers (Department for education and skills, 2001). The literature uses different terms to describe students of this category and they also differ from one another internationally. Consequently, teaching strategies and approaches to children affected by sensory disabilities are diverse (Davis and Florian, 2004).

The Department of Education offered five main sub-groups in the 'Guidance for school'. These categories are: severe/profound hearing loss, mild/moderate hearing loss, blind, partially sighted and multi-sensory impairment (see Table 4).

Pupils may have difficulty in hearing with a mild/moderate loss (MMHL) or a severe/profound loss (SPHL). While some of them were born deaf caused by different

[7] http://www.languageswithoutlimits.co.uk/autism.html
[8] http://www.brighthubeducation.com/

Sensory difficulties
Severe/profound hearing loss (SPHL)
Mild/moderate hearing loss (MMHL)
Blind (BL)
Partially sighted (PS)
Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

Table 4 – Sensory difficulties (DfE, 2006)

constituents such as genetic factors, accidents, problems in a pregnancy, complications during birth, others can become deaf later on due to variety of early childhood illnesses such as mumps or measles[9]. For academic purposes, children are considered to have a hearing impairment if they need hearing aids and particular teaching strategies.

Also pupils who have visual impairments are identified in this category and they cover the whole ability range. They range from those with a partial sight to those who are blind. They need specific teaching strategies with the aids of tactile and hearing methods of learning and differentiated materials (Department of Education, 2006).

Finally, pupils with both visual and hearing difficulties are recorded in the multi-sensory impairment (MSI) subcategory. Children with MSI have difficulties in perception, communication and in the acquisition of information.

2.2.5 Physical difficulties

Physical difficulties
Cerebral Palsy
Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH)
Muscular dystrophy (MD)
Significant accidental injury (SAI)
Other (OPN)

Table 5 – Physical difficulties (DfE, 2006)

Physical, neurological or metabolic causes may cause physical impairments which most of the time require appropriate access to educational facilities and equipment (Department for education and skills, 2001). Not all the pupils with physical disabilities are students with special educational needs: some of them have a disability but are able to attend normal classes without additional provision. The subcategories

[9] http://specialed.about.com/cs/teacherstrategies/a/hearing.htm

presented in Table 5 are the ones in which the impact on their education may be severe and feel the necessity for additional help. The cerebral palsy (CP) is a indisposition of posture and movement due to alterations of childish cerebral function; the Spina bifida (a) and/or (b) hydrocephalus (SBH) refer to (a) a developmental congenital disorder and (b) to a medical condition in which there is an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid; Muscular dystrophy (MD) is a group of muscle diseases that weaken the musculoskeletal system; students with significant accidental injury (SAI) are those who have special educational needs as a result of a significant accidental injury; and others which comprehend any other physical disability which forms a barrier to learning[10].

2.2.6 Medical conditions/ Syndromes

Physical impairments can also be related to medical conditions. Pupils with epilepsy (EPIL), asthma (ASTH), diabetes (DIAB), anaphylaxis (ANXS) and the ones who are down (DOWN) have relevant medical diagnosis which impacts significantly on their access to learning.

Medical Conditions/Syndromes
Epilepsy (EPIL)
Asthma (ASTH)
Diabetes (DIAB)
Anaphylaxis (ANXS)
Down (DOWN)
Other medical conditions/syndromes (OMCS)
Interaction of complex medical needs (ICMN)
Mental Health Issues (MHI)

Table 6 - Medical Conditions / Syndromes (DfE, 2006)

In other medical conditions/syndromes (OMCS) other less common disorders are incorporated and in Interaction of complex medical needs (ICMN) are included pupils with other pathologies. Finally, in this category we find children with mental health

[10] http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/hydrocephalus.html

issues (MHI) who need extra special aids (Department of education, 2006).

Children with medical conditions often experience restricted curriculum and social access to facilities in mainstream schools, including the ones with epilepsy (Parkinson, 2002). Although any recent studies found no disruption in education for these last mentioned, there is a dearth of evidence-based literature that explores best practice in access to learning for this group (Closs, 2000).

2.3 Types of Support

There are at least twenty symptoms which should help parents and educators understand if a child needs special education. However, the symptoms are all characteristics of normal childhood too and this is the reason why it is not easy to spot the difficulties of the student (European Commission, 2013).

Obtaining a formal assessment is the first step to discover whether the child has special educational needs. It is carried out by Educational Psychologists, who will observe the child very carefully, will conduct a variety of tests to spot the areas of difficulties and then will find strategies that will help the learner. If extra or different help, such as teaching in a different way, different learning materials, extra help individually or in a small group, specialist equipment or an individually planned teaching/learning programme is required, the child may be placed on School Action or School Action Plus, which are designed to facilitate the learning of a child through a graduated programme of help and intervention[11]. The strategies to support pupils' needs are usually set out in an individual educational plan (IEP). An IEP describes the areas where a child with special education needs is experiencing the difficulties and it should specify what should be taught, how it should be taught and how often. The

[11] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/

three or four short-term targets pinpointed are based on individual needs and they will cover a variety of objectives and different situations. Targets include qualities such as specificity, measure, achievement, relevancy and time related. When targets are obtained, new targets will be added; if they are not met, it is necessary to analyse the reasons[12].

Students with special educational needs require support and teaching strategies depending on their problems and abilities. There are various stages of support, starting from the soft one up to the hard one. Children with high needs will go to the last step of help, while students with low needs will not need to go through the levels. The stages are: school action, school action plus, assessment and statement of special educational needs[13].

2.3.1 School Action

This is the first stage that students with special educational needs go through. Teachers or SEN Coordinators (SENCo)[14] should discuss the needs of the child and find the right help to give, which usually is extra to or different from that provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum (Department for Education, 2012). The support given could vary from the differing of teaching methodology to the help of an extra adult, such as the aid of a teaching assistant. School Action is taken to support learners who demonstrate limited or no progress, difficulty with the basics, problems with social communication and interaction, emotional or behavioural difficulties which have not improved by behaviour management techniques, and sensory or physical problems which no progresses were made using the provision of specialist

[12] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/sen/sen-and-schools/sen-in-the-classroom/301/individual-education-plans-ieps

[13] https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/types-of-support

[14] Special Educational Needs Coordinators are the people who coordinate and support a child needs

equipment[15].

2.3.1.1 Teaching Assistant

Teaching assistants (TA) assist children with organisation, helping them to succeed, to become more self-reliant over time and to make them acquire new skills. They also offer in-class support and may be involved with assessment and record keeping, lesson planning and preparation and modification of teaching and learning materials to meet specific needs[16]. Although materials have to be adapted to meet the needs of the learner, work should not be too different from that undertaken by the rest of the class; different learning styles are adopted to let the child achieve the learning objectives. The teaching assistant also needs to make sure that the child develops friendship groups and relies on his/her skills and abilities and not always on the help and support of others. The support given evolves over time to meet the demands of the curriculum and consider the improvements of the student[17]. Effective support will enable the pupil to develop the skills necessary to become an autonomous student, competent, confident and valued (Department for Education, 2000).

2.3.2 School Action Plus

Students at this stage need clear individual programmes to support targets, specialist teaching approaches, specialist learning materials and an external specialist, such as therapists (Department for Education, 2012). School Action Plus is taken to support children who make no progress in specific areas over a long period, struggle to

[15] http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/9/special_educational_needs
[16] http://www.vnc.org.uk/class/role2.htm
[17] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/special-needs-advice/sen-professional-help/31/teaching-assistants

produce work, have difficulties with the basics, progress with behaviour or emotional difficulties, have sensory, medical or physical needs and ongoing communication or interaction difficulties.

There are different types of therapist according to the needs of students:

- Occupational therapist. This type of therapist helps and trains all neuro-diverse conditions, with a range of difficulties whether physical disabilities, behavioural problems or neutral differences. The occupational therapist work starts by assessing the children in their complexity and in their environment, evaluating their sensory skills, motor control and understanding skills. Subsequently, a diagnosis will be carried out in which child's strengths and difficulties will be highlighted. In order to help children to cope with life in and out of school, a treatment is generally needed; it is usually recommended to help improve sensory integration, balancing skills, fine motor skills (like handwriting), gross motor skills (like kicking a ball) hand-eye co-ordination or organisational skills. Treatment may include exercises, games, learning strategies (that may require additional training) and self-care[18];
- Speech and language therapist (SaLT). The therapist helps students with autistic spectrum disorders or dyspraxia where there are a range of communication difficulties and where language is delayed. There are different types of communication problems which can be experienced by some students: difficulty with speech sounds, problems with spoken language, social communication difficulties, where the problem lies with the pragmatic aspects of communication, stammering, difficulties in eating, drinking or swallowing. Therapist's role varies depending on the child's needs: the therapy may be a

[18] http://www.specialeducationalneeds.co.uk/UsefulInformation/SEN_EducationInfo/OccupationalTherapy.html and http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/special-needs-advice/sen-professional-help/27/the-occupational-therapist

one-to-one session or a group session, directed or indirected[19];

- Osteopathist. The role of an osteopathist is to help students who have lower-back problems and have never crawled. Instead, autistic learners and children who had difficult or caesarean births can be helped by cranio-sacral therapy[20];
- Nutritional therapist. This type of therapist advises on a healthy diet and on the effect of specific factors. It has been argued that students eating healthy food have improvements in behaviour.[21]

Furthermore, there are other methodologies which can be used. The *nurture group* is an example. It is a form of early interventions for children who may have difficulties in their education due to social and emotional problems. Nurture groups provide a safe and healthy environment in which children can play and learn, and their social skills, confidence, behaviour management are assisted. In fact, the six principles of nurture groups are: children's learning is understood developmentally, the classroom offers a safe base, nurture is important for the development of self-esteem, language is understood as a vital means of communication, all behaviour is communication and transitions are significant in the lives of children.[22] However, not everybody can acquire advantages from a restriction in the group: a Boxall test is run on the children to individualise the ones who can benefit. According to this methodology, routine, consistency and continuity are very important. The children have a daily timetable which is discussed at the beginning of the day to let the children know what they are doing and when.[23]

---

[19] http://www.douglassilassolicitors.co.uk/UsefulInformation/SEN_EducationInfo/SpeechandLanguageTherapy.html and http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/special-needs-advice/sen-professional-help/30/the-speech-and-language-therapist-salt

[20] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/special-needs-advice/sen-professional-help/32/sen-professionals

[21] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/special-needs-advice/sen-professional-help/32/sen-professionals

[22] Luca et al., 2006 in http://www.nurturegroups.org/pages/what-are-nurture-groups.html

[23] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/your-child/under-5-s/159/nurture-groups

2.3.3 Assessment

When students have high needs, an assessment of special educational needs is usually carried out by the UK council in order to find the best remedy for the child and also to find out how the school can best help the child. Parents, SENCo, educational psychologists, teachers and experts are involved in the assessment in order to give their judgements and opinions about the child's needs (Department for Education and skills, 2001). Children are carefully observed to see how they learn, their profile of strengths and weaknesses and the difficulties that they experience in various areas, such as behaviour, speaking, concentration, organisation, cohesion of movement and memory. In order to understand how the students with SEN react and behave in different contexts, the educational psychologist (EP) may observe them in and outside the classroom. Sometimes also a list of exercises which include reading, spelling, writing, maths, verbal and logical reasoning needs are given to the children for a further assessment. Subsequently, feedback from the psychological assessment will be compiled by the educational psychologist[24]. This can be in a verbal report, or a written one, or both, where recommendations to other professionals may be made (Department for Education, 2009).

2.3.4 Statement

A statement of special educational needs indicates the needs of the child and the support they need in order to facilitate their learning. Descriptions of support and

[24] http://www.specialeducationalneeds.co.uk/UsefulInformation/SEN_EducationInfo/EducationalPsychologists.html

schools where they should go are also given. They are formulated after the assessment and are reviewed every year. Statements contain the personal details of the child, details of all of the child's SEN, prescriptions of the diagnosis of needs which has to include objectives, educational provision and monitoring, descriptions of the school the child will attend and finally information of non-educational needs and non-education provision.[25]

2.4 Conclusion

As can be seen from the previous pages, it seems that it is very hard to define special educational needs and their categories. Teachers are faced daily:

> with deciding whether provision should be based on the progress of class peers, or the level of progress expected from the population of same aged individuals or progress from the individual's own baseline (NASUWT, 2008: 9).

They may identify a child as having SEN, while in another school or in another context, they may not be considered as such. Some of them may consider that SEN has a psychological component both of its cause and effect, others may have a preference to recognise that SEN has biological/medical elements. In the first case, teachers seek to reduce SEN by trying to change teaching strategies and learning environment in order to identify and remove 'barriers to learning'; in the second instance, teachers may see that 'special' coincides with specialist knowledge and specialist teaching (NASUWT, 2008).

In reality, each experience of SEN differs from one another due to a combination of

[25] http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/help-and-advice/special-needs-advice/sen-law-and-you/138/statutory-assessments-and-statements-of-sen

biological, psychological and social factors (Norwich, 2002) and in this way teachers should be encouraged that to see the identification of students with SEN is a complex process and may cause confusion which creates problems especially for the resources and provision (NASUWT, 2008). Davis and Florian (2004) suggested in their research that:

> differences between the profile of the type of evidence associated with each strand area has much to do with the cultural and historical development of research in that area, as well as to the nature of the 'special educational need' under investigation (Davis and Florian, 2004: 4).

Classification also has its problems and, although the Department of Education (2006) distinguished the categories mentioned above and defined them an essential factor in education, some writers such as Corbett, Solity, Thomas, Loxley have stated that

> the language of SEN itself continues to reflect a deficit model, that it is stigmatising and discriminatory term and that it expresses a form of bad-mouthing (Norwich, 2002 in NASUWT, 2008: 48).

Furthermore, Davis and Florian (2003) found that teaching strategies and approaches are not always related to specific categories of special educational needs. Behavioural, social constructivist and ecological approaches overlap in the various areas leaving space to a range of theoretical perspectives in which there is an increasing understanding of psychological and educational connections. Nevertheless, mass educational systems in Western Society have caused 'differences' which are inevitably a problem to face.

The fact that the term SEN covers an array of problems means that many people are disabled by an impairment but they may or may not be handicapped by the condition. It follows that there are many students who have special educational needs. According to the statistics Department for Education – Department for Business and

Innovation skills – in 2012 around the 17% (almost 1,4 million children) of pupils in school in England were identified with some sort of Special Educational Need without statement and 2.8% of pupils have statements of SEN (Department for Education, 2012).

The distribution of the primary type of need for pupils at school action plus presented in English State-funded primary, English state-funded secondary and English special schools are represented in the following chart (Figure 1). Information is drawn from the School Census and the SEN2 survey; number and levels of provision for special educational need were based on the position in the January 2012.

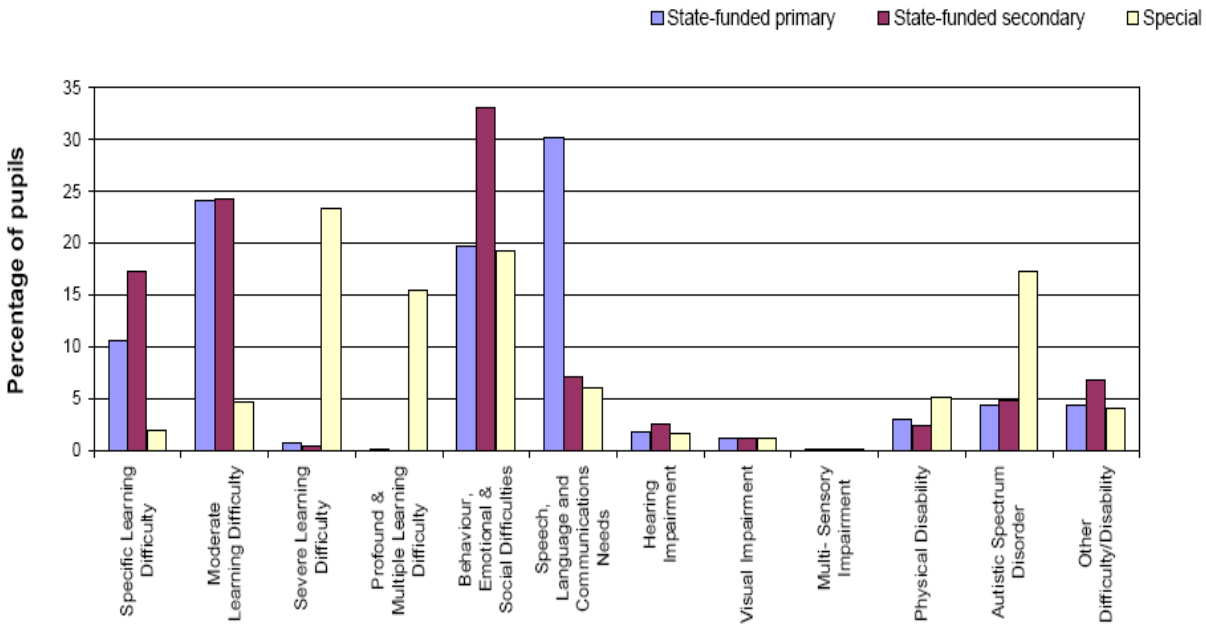


Figure 1 (in Department for Education, 2012: 11)

Furthermore, other studies reveal that in the UK there are significantly more children who need extra special aids than most other European countries. In Italy, for example, only 6.4% of pupils are considered to have SEN (Istat, 2013). Hence, it should not be a

surprise if the English newspaper *Express* published the article “Why is one in five UK pupils on special needs list?” arguing that “the number of children with learning difficulties in England is five times higher than in Europe because schools are too quick to label pupils” (Express, 1-03-2013). Similarly, the *Daily Mail* wrote “UK has FIVE times as many 'special needs' pupils as EU average: schools accused of classifying poor performers as having learning difficulties”, highlighting that pupils identified as having special educational needs represent 19.8% of school population, compared with EU average of 4% (Daily Mail, 28-02-2013).

Schools should help children with extra help in order to facilitate the learning, adapt the learning environment and place a child on the special needs register which allows for appropriate interventions to be sought. Good teachers should communicate and involve all staff, address the child personally, have a focused learning environment, provide a quite area, reinforce oral instructions, use visual prompts, use a practically based curriculum, provide good role models, help children build friendships, encourage communication and celebrate differences (McEachern-Kelly, 2008).

To conclude, one can say that:

> in the context of a policy of inclusion labelling, categorising and other practices associated with special education need to be critically evaluated against the outcomes for, and experiences of, the individual learner rather than accepted without question simply because they are part of the way things have always been done and serve the purposes of the educational establishment (NASUWT, 2008: 50).

Chapter 3

POLICY AND STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Having analysed the individual differences and the various categories of students with SEN, I believe it is important to briefly describe the historical context, as it provides a baseline for understanding the current policy of provision for modern foreign language learning and students with SEN.

While some believe that the policy of inclusion generates advantages, others believe that it brings disadvantages, such as the difficulty to exclude pupils for anything other than very serious offences (Davis and Florian, 2004). In any case, teachers are experiencing the effects of interpretations of these policies at Local Authority and school level. There is a change in mainstream and special school populations which has led teachers to develop different strategies and approaches to accommodate students' necessities.

Thus, the first part of this chapter presents the various educational reforms carried out in the UK since the Educational Reform Act (1988) as considered "the most important education act since 1944"[26] which "made considerable changes to the

[26] http://www.educationengland.org.uk

education system"[27]; subsequently, arguments and issues concerning the policy of inclusion are discussed, and the development in provision for pupils with SEN is explored. In addition, a brief section will investigate the teaching of modern foreign languages to pupils with SEN in the UK. The second part of this chapter focuses on the different strategies and methodologies used in the various secondary schools and on the forms of support for children with SEN.

3.1 Historical development of mainstream provision

There have been many attempts to reform the UK education system in second-half of the 20th century. In the 1980s fears about poor and failing education and concerns about widening access and educational inequality emerged and in order to improve it, the Conservative governments introduced the so called 'market mechanisms' into the UK education system. The package of these market-oriented reforms, whose the 1988 *Educational Reform Act* was the first one, aimed to improve the accountability of state funded schools and the information available to parents about the effectiveness of schools. As Besley and Ghatak (2003) stated, the critical issue was to find the ways to stimulate schools to improve and enhance educational outcomes in the widest meaning (Machin and Vignoles, 2006). The *Act* included provisions concerning the curriculum, the admission of pupils to county and voluntary schools, local management of schools (LMS), grant maintained (GM) schools; city technology colleges (CTCs), and changes in further and higher education[28]. The standardization of the National Curriculum was introduced, which made compulsory for schools to teach a set of subjects for students aged seven and sixteen and also in all primary schools literary and numeracy hours became compulsory. National curriculum assessments

[27] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_England
[28] http://www.educationengland.org.uk

were introduced at the Key Stages 1 to 4, where the assessment at the Key Stage 4 was made from the GCSE exam[29]: the examination system which was reformed in 1988 from the GCE 'O' in order to facilitate students to pass the exams (Gipps and Stobart, 1997, Blanden at al., 2005 in Machin and Vignoles, 2006). Unlike the GCE 'O' based only on exams, it also had a coursework component. This facilitated examinations and an increase in the pass rate was achieved. Furthermore, the *Act* introduced new rules regarding the admission of students to maintained schools and the 'formula funding' which indicates that school budgets are determined on the basis of the number and ages of the pupils: the more children a school attracts to it, the more money the school receives[30].

At the end of the 20th century, during the 1997 General Election, the Labour party led by Tony Blair, was elected and, although many hoped that the election would usher in a new 'golden age' in education, it quickly emerged that new policies would be little different from those of the previous government[31]. The education policies were set out in the white paper *Excellence in schools* (1997), which made it clear that the government's aim was to make all secondary schools specialist. These are schools which teach specialist branches of knowledge added to the National Curriculum subjects. As it is argued in the white paper:

> schools with a specialism will continue to be able to give priority to those children who demonstrate the relevant aptitude, as long as that is not misused to select on the basis of general academic ability. (DfEE 1997: 71)

Furthermore, reforms for privatization were introduced:

> these consisted of clusters of schools in deprived areas working together, with government grants and sponsorship from local businesses, and assuming some of the functions of the LEA.[32]

[29] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_England#The_Education_Reform_Act_of_1988

[30] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_England

[31] http://www.educationengland.org.uk

[32] http://www.educationengland.org.uk/

Only three years later, the government decided to create a network of 'city academies' - effectively private schools paid for by the state[33].

In June 2001, the New Labour party won another landslide victory in the general election, and the guise of specialization, privatization and academies program were promoted and taken further. In addition, further changes in the National Curriculum were made.

In 2007, the important and ambitious document Children's Plan Building brighter futures was published by the government. It was designed to underpin and inform all future government policy relating to children, their families and schools and aimed to eradicate child poverty and reduce illiteracy and antisocial behaviour.

3.1.1 Historical development of foreign language teaching

There have been various provisions regarding the teaching of modern foreign languages in secondary schools. While in the early 1960s, only an elite group of able students could study foreign languages, with the arrival of the comprehensive system of education in 1965, the number of students studying a second language increased (McEachern-Kelly, 2008). From 1989 various reforms rendered compulsory the learning of at least one foreign languages to pupils aged eleven to sixteen in schools and inquiries and initiatives promoted language learning in the UK. In 2002, for example, the government published *Languages for All:learning for life,* its strategy for the teaching of foreign languages. However, in 2004, a significant change in legislation made the learning of a foreign language compulsory only until the age of fourteen. This had huge effects on the number of students studying a language up to GCSE: 78%

[33] http://www.educationengland.org.uk/

in 2001, 68% in 2004, 59% in 2005, 51% in 2006, 46% in 2007 , 44% in 2008 , 44% in 2009, 40% in 2010 (CILT press release 20/1/10; Roderio 2009 in Lanvers, 2011), which also had consequences for the university sector. Nowadays, schools can decide on how to implement language tuition: while most private schools have made language learning compulsory, the majority of schools have made languages optional over fourteen (Lanvers, 2011).

3.2 The Development of SEN Provision in the UK

Not only have there been attempts to reform the UK education system in general, but also the education for pupils with special educational needs. Although the term SEN is relatively recent, already at the end of the 18th century, there were special schools for the blind, for the deaf, for the physically handicapped and for the mentally defective people. The first efforts to cater for some handicapped children and concerns for the plight of the disabled had no success and only after the 1870 Act, which established the rights of universal elementary education, did the government issue some regulations for these children; the *Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act* was emanated in 1893, while the *Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act* in 1899[34].

With the introduction of compulsory education at the end of the 19th century, awareness of the problems exhibited by such children became widespread and provisions for children with SEN developed gradually. Arrangements were based mainly on seven factors, which are:

- the existence of the political will to initiate and sustain developments for pupils with SEN;

[34] http://www.educationengland.org.uk/

- the provision of adequate resources by LEAs (Local Education Authorities) to meet the needs of children with SEN in mainstream schools;
- the development of positive societal attitudes to people with disabilities, including children with SEN;
- the development of curricula which are suitable for meeting the needs of such pupils;
- priority given to effective inclusion of such pupils within mainstream schools;
- the provision of adequate training for teachers working with pupils with SEN;
- the effective organisation and management of SEN provision in schools and LEAs (Stakes and Hornby, 2000: 2).

Following the 1902 *Education Act*, the new LEAs started to exercise functions which were previously executed by school boards, and provided secondary education for blind, deaf, defective and epileptic children. Considerable progress in special education needs provision has been made in second-half of the 20th century, especially after the publication of the Warnock Report in 1978. The Warnock Report of 1978 proposed the integration of pupils with SEN into mainstream schools, paying attention not only on their problems, but also on their achievements (McEachern-Kelly, 2008). Furthermore, the Warnock Report estimated that "one in five or one in six children would at some time in their school career, experience individual difficulties described as SEN" (Banks and McCoy, 2011: 45); meeting the needs of all pupils, e.g. six students with SEN in a class of thirty students, is a challenging task for MFL teachers who need to differentiate materials and continuously change activities.

More attention was paid to the child guidance service, which was to be based on a multi-professional team, providing assessment, diagnosis, consultation, treatment and other help; help was extended to children with behavioural, emotional and learning difficulties[35].

[35] http://www.educationengland.org.uk/

Several articles and documents guide the current practice for working with children with SEN. Among them, the 1981 and 1996 *Education Acts*, the 1988 *Education Act* which provided the framework for the National Curriculum guidance; and the *The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* published in 1994, which contains the most extensive guidance to date (Stakes and Hornby, 2000).

At a later stage, in 1997 the government committed the *Special Educational Needs (SEN) Green Paper, Excellence for All children* (DfEE, 1997), which affirmed the support of the government for the inclusion of pupils with SEN in primary and secondary schools; successively re-stated and developed many times, in particular by the guidance on *Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs* (DfES, 2001) and by the SEN strategy document *Removing the barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004). In 2011, the UK Green Paper (2011) has suggested the need for 'a whole new approach for identifying SEN'. Since the Education Act 1944, which originally established eleven categories of 'handicap', students with SEN have been categorised, first through the SEN categories, and then through the terms School Action, School Action Plus and students with statement. The Green Paper proposed to replace the system with a new single school-based category of SEN and a programme covering school, health and social services. Furthermore, it aims to "include parents and introduce a legal right (by 2014) to give them control of funding for the support of their child with SEN" (Department for Education, 2011).

3.2.1 The Policy of Inclusion

In the UK, the last three decades have been characterised by substantive educational developments; as Hegarty notices: "In 30 years we have moved from a segregation paradigm, through integration to inclusion" (Terzi, 2010: 18).

The term 'inclusion' replaced the term of 'integration', due to two main interrelated factors: (a) integration was often associated to the opposite of segregation, with little improvement in terms of the actual content and practice of education; (b) the move relates to the “progressively stronger influence exercised by disabled people's movements who have advanced their request for equal consideration” (Terzi, 2010: 19).

It has been introduced only in the last decade and thus the concept is limited and unsatisfactory. It is a multi-dimensional concept; some interpret it in terms of the placement of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools rather than special ones; others see inclusion as a matter of participation, learning and placement (Dyson et al., 2004). According to the Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education

> inclusive means being proactive in identifying the barriers that many encounter in accessing educational opportunities and identifying the resources needed to overcome those barriers. (UNESCO, 2009: 8)

Thus, inclusion is seen as a process of embracing the diversity of needs of all children, through enhancing participation in learning, cultures and communities. This implies changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies (which I will discuss in the next sections), and the whole system should bring many benefits. Among them, there are:

- an educational justification: schools need to develop methodologies of teaching which respond to individual differences;
- a social justification: schools form the basis for a non-discriminatory society as children play and learn together;
- an economic justification: it is cheaper to maintain schools which educate children together instead of maintaining many different special schools (UNESCO, 2009: 8).

However, there is by now a very large literature [e.g. Capper and Pickett (1994), York, Vandercook, Macdonald, Heise-Neff, and Caughey (1992), Shevlin and O'Moore (2000), Fisher, Pumpian and Sax (1998), Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci, and Peck (1994), Murray-Seegert (1989), Peck, Donaldson, and Pezzoli (1990), Hoyle and Serafica (1988), Juvonen and Bear, 1992, Hendrickson, Shokoohi-Yekta, Hamre-Nietupski, and Gable (1996), Helmstetter, Peck and Giangreco (1994)] which addresses issues within inclusive education and mainly researchers have tried to see if children with SEN do better in mainstream or special settings. The general conclusion was that the placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools

> has no major adverse consequences for the children's academic achievement, behavioural and attitudes and that there can be positive benefits, particularly in relation to mainstream children's attitudes and understanding of disability. (Dyson et al., 2004: 28)

However, these considerations were carried out in the United States and numbers of schools and pupils involved was quite small (Dyson et al., 2004).

The first study which explored the issues of inclusion and achievement, and the way schools can be inclusive and high performing, in the UK, was the one executed by some researchers of the University of Manchester and the University of Newcastle (Dyson et al., 2004). They analysed as sample 16 schools whose 8 were primary schools, and the others were secondary schools. They found out that schools which are highly inclusive have very different populations and, although their SEN provision is different from one school to another, all of them aim to achieve flexibility of provision, using teaching assistant and individual planning. Schools also tend to share a positive welcoming ethos, use a range of strategies for raising achievement, some focusing on raising the overall quality of teaching, some remedying weaknesses in pupils' skills and capacities and some focusing on specific targets in a more instrumental way. In conclusion, their research shows that inclusivity does not cause

problems on pupil attainment but actually children with SEN make good progress academically, personally and socially, to varying degrees. In addition to this, they developed a general model of provision which should be adapted by each school (see Table 1).

In highly-inclusive schools:
Provision for pupils with special educational needs tend to be characterised by flexibility. Pupils are neither rigidly segregated from their peers nor 'dumped' in mainstream classes, but are offered careful mixtures of provision in a range of settings. The precise mix is customised to the characteristics of individual pupils rather than being decided on a whole group basis. *This customisation of provision depends on careful assessment, planning and monitoring at an individual level.* Commonly, this is part of wider monitoring systems across the whole school population. *Flexible provision is typically supported by the careful use of adult support.* This is provided out of the resources which the school receives for pupils with high levels of SEN, but also from a commitment on the part of the school to resource its SEN provision well and from the school's ability to direct its resources effectively. *Flexibility of provision is paralleled by flexibility of pedagogy in mainstream classes and by high-quality teaching in non-mainstream situations.* *Schools typically have a commitment to the principle of inclusion which is shared by a large proportion of the staff.* This does not necessarily have to be highly ideological and may take the form of a commitment to doing the best by all children. It tends, moreover, to coexist with a sense of the practical difficulties of educating a wide range of pupils in the same setting. *Alongside strategies directed towards pupils with SEN, high-performing schools also have strategies directed towards raising achievement more generally.* Some of these are likely to be instrumental (i.e. aiming directly at enhancing measured attainment and school performance), but others will be directed at underlying capacities and achievements and some will include pupils with SEN.

Table 1 – A model of inclusive provision (Dyson et al., 2004: 97)

In order to improve the quality of education, the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005*

suggested five dimensions to influence the teaching and learning processes: learner characteristics, contexts, enabling inputs, teaching and learning, outcomes. These dimensions are linked together and should be addressed in an integrated manner (UNESCO, 2009).

Concluding, the policy of inclusion suggests that difficulties can be overcome by schools adapting to meet the needs of the pupils with SEN; inclusion can enhance academic achievement of children through the proper learning environment and with the peer, who shall be considered as a person of the same age, status or ability. Quality and equity are central to ensuring inclusive education.

From the previous sections, it is possible to see that there have been many reforms regarding education and students with special educational needs. These reflect the fact that in many cases, the content of courses, teaching methods and assessment techniques need to be adapted to different situations and hence need to change. For this reasons, the various approaches and methods used to accommodate students' needs will now be presented.

3.3 Foreign language teaching approaches and methodologies

Foreign language teaching changes according to the new needs and demands of students and teachers. Thus, there is a continual need to elaborate new approaches and methodologies which could be used for all learners in different contexts. Since the history of language teaching began, researchers' aims have focused on the search for the 'right' method, which has never been found and probably never will be found (Nunan, 2000). However, in the past two decades there have been important innovations in theory, research and classroom experience which are giving new ideas to foreign language teaching. The changes can be summarised as: new ways of seeing language, new ways of teaching, new ways of seeing learners' contributions and new

ways of planning. Thus, the teaching-learning process along with activities and roles have become the significant substance of lessons (Cerezal Sierra, 1995).

One of the aims of applied linguistics and teachers concerned with second foreign language learning is to overcome the effects in language teaching. Whereas there is a consistent number of attempts to describe new methods and approaches, and whereas many articles define the symptoms of foreign language learning disabilities, the literature does not give sufficient attention to how these findings can be used in the foreign language classroom in the best possible way.

Nonetheless, on the next pages the principal methods which have been used will be briefly analysed, followed by a description of the forms of support for special educational needs. First, the definition of concepts such as approach, method, technique and methodologies, which are mutually and hierarchically related, is given in order to understand the concepts presented later on. Subsequently, some changes and transformations occurring in the United Kingdom are introduced.

3.3.1 Definitions

In 1963 the American applied linguistic Edward Anthony identified three levels of conceptualization and organisation in order to clarify the difference between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language. He named the three levels in terms of approach, method and technique (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). An approach, according to Anthony, is the set of assumptions and beliefs dealing with language, learning and teaching, that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. Method is the practical part in which the particular skills and content to be taught were chosen. It follows that techniques are specific classroom activities (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Richards and Renandya, 2003). However, although this

model is easy to comprehend and it has been useful in distinguishing the theoretical principles from the practical ones, the nature of method itself and the correlation between the three levels are not widely discussed (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Other linguistics attempted to give different definitions regarding method. Just to name a few, Mackey in 1965 elaborated a new model of language teaching which focuses on the dimensions of selection, gradation, presentation, and repetition. However, this model does not analyse the level of approach and it also fails to pay sufficient attention to the actual classroom behaviours of teachers and learners and, as a consequence, it cannot really be used as a basis for comprehensive analysis of either approaches or methods (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Twenty years later, Richards and Rodgers (1986) redefined method defining it as an umbrella term which includes approaches, designs and procedures. Prabhu (1990) also explained method as union of theory and activities (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Nevertheless, researchers still commonly refer to methods in the way Anthony did, and consider a method "as a set of theoretically unified classroom techniques though to be generalizable across a wide variety of contexts and audiences" (Richards and Renandya, 2003: 9). Generally speaking, different methods are not separated by a marked line, but actually there is an eclectic mixture of methods. Although methods are different, they all have the perception that if principles about behaviour are faithfully followed, they will result in learning for all (Nunan, 2000).

Up to now, the definition of method, approach and technique has been briefly presented and the above denotations need to be kept in mind for the following sections. Furthermore, although the various methodologies are not included in this thesis, I believe that the definition of methodology should be given to clarify the difference between method and methodologies, and also to have a general view of the fundamental notions of language teaching. 'Methodology' is defined in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics as follows: "the study of the practices and

procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them" (Richards et all. 1985:177 in Nunan, 2000: 2). Methodology includes the study of the nature of language skills (e.g. reading, writing, speaking, listening) and the procedures for teaching them, the study of the preparation of lesson plans, materials, and textbooks for teaching language skills, and the evaluation and comparison of language teaching methods (Nunan, 2000).

Many other definitions have been given of methodology; just to give a few names I quote Somekh and Lewin (2005), Walter (2006), Leedy and Ormrod (2005). Although historically there has been a tendency to consider methodology and method as the same thing, they are not: the methodology is the discipline that in turn uses these methods (Nunan, 2000). The most common interpretation suggests that methodology refers to the overall approach to research combined with the theoretical framework, while method is systematic modes, procedures or tools utilised for collection and analysis of data (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006) .

3.3.2 Transformation and changes in the UK regarding approaches and methodology

Teaching is not static but changes continuously. In the last fifty years there has been a significant transformation in language teaching and learning also in the United Kingdom. As stated in a European Community Study of 1997 "Learning Modern Languages at School in the European Union", modern languages have been taught with a variety of methods (McEachern-Kelly, 2008). While some of them have fallen into relative obscurity, others are still widely used. However, also the ones that had a small following, have contributed insights that may be adsorbed into the generally accepted mix.

In the early 1960s, the most widely used method was grammar translation, which

stressed written language, translation and grammar, but it neglected the value of modern languages in developing social skills. As Whitehead (1996) argues, languages were studied almost exclusively in their written form (Hawkins, 1996).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, this method was replaced by the audio-lingual and audiovisual methods. In the same period, the Council of Europe started to promote the teaching of languages for communication to the whole school population, and was responsible for a new approach for teaching and learning languages which identified as its language syllabus the 'Thereshold Level'. This intermediate level is one of the six common reference levels which have been put together by the Council of Europe, between 1986 and 1996, in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Council of Europe, 2011). It was created as a way of standardising the levels of language teaching and exams in different regions. In the 'Thereshold Level' (1975), a model of a functional and notional syllabus design, was provided by Van Ek. This produced new methodologies, new materials, multi-media systems, assessment and self-assessment, learner autonomy, implications for language teacher training (McEachern-Kelly, 2008). It follows that since the mid 1970s, the development of communicative competence has become the main aim of teaching and learning a modern foreign language. Canale (1983) pinpoints four components that contribute to communicative competence: grammatical competence (including phonology, orthography, vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation); socio-linguistic competence (expression and understanding of social meanings appropriate to different socio-linguistic contexts, and of grammatical forms appropriate to their expression); discourse competence (knowledge of different linguistic genres, together with their related devices for cohesion and coherence); strategic competence (ways of coping with grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and performance difficulties (Canale in Richards and Schmidt, 1983: 6).

Summarising, it is worth noting that at the beginning of the language teaching history, language teaching was focusing on the written part (grammar-translation methods). Later on, the teaching of languages focused on the learning of the oral language, which gave rise to some of the contrasts between spoken and written language. Thus, the subdivision of Brown and Yule between the translational and the interactional functions; the first function refers to the transfer of information and the getting of good and services, while the second one regards the social relationships (Brown and Yule, 1983; Richards, 1990 in Nunan, 2000).

3.4 Language Teaching Methods

As seen in the previous section, methods have changed and developed with time. Many theories about the learning and teaching of languages have been proposed. These theories, normally influenced by developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology, have inspired many approaches to the teaching of foreign languages. Methods are also identified as representations of languages knowledge for pedagogical aims; in other words they are the combination of theories, research and proposal for carrying out classroom activities. As a consequence, foreign language teaching methods have appeared as a result of the application of the new theoretical findings.

3.4.1 The Grammar-Translation method and other teaching methods

This method was historically used for the study of Latin and Greek, and was then generalised to teaching modern languages from the 17th to the 20th centuries. In the 19th, this method was widespread in Europe and, although it has been proved that it is

ineffective by itself, it has not wholly died out (Cerezal Sierra, 1995). The Grammar-Translation Method focuses on grammar and provides lists of vocabulary translated into the mother tongue with direct translations to memorise. It favours written language instead of the spoken language, and in particular the study of grammatical rules; successful students are considered the ones who can translate, even though they cannot communicate orally (Cerezal Sierra, 1995).

Towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the rise of structural linguistics, which focused on the structural and phonological characteristics and not on parts of speech any more, and the advent of World War II led to the emergence of the need for oral communication and the ability to speak foreign languages fluently. From these necessities and from developments in behavioural psychology, the *Audio-Lingual Method* was proposed in the 1940s and 1950s to ensure that military personnel could achieve conversational proficiency in the target language (thus, the reason why it was first named the *Army Method*) (Griffiths, 2012). Although it developed as a reaction against more traditional methods, the focus was still “on learning grammatical structures” and “not on the development of real-life communication skills” (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011: 3). The method was based on the principles of behaviour psychology, and thus consisted of memorization of structural patterns essential for L2 learning and lessons depended on grammatical structures sequenced in a linear manner, from the easy structure to the more complex forms (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). It was considered the first approach to develop a 'technology' of teaching, as the distinction between theory and practice is clear (Nunan, 2000).

Subsequently, other methods emerged; just to name a few: the Oral and Situational Method, the Silent Way, the Total Physical Response and the Suggestopedia. The *Situational approach* or *Oral approach method* has its origin in the British applied linguistics of the 1920s and 1930s and was prevailing in the 1960s. It gives importance

to the oral aspects of language, breaking with the old grammar tradition and giving teaching the sense of art. However, although grammar no longer consists of rules, but a list of structures which need to be combined together, it is still taught. Grammar is learnt by an inductive process with oral procedures. Its syllabus is organised in patterns, teacher is seen as a model and students are expected to deduce word meaning from context (Cerezal Sierra, 1995).

Total Physical Response was elaborated in the 1960s by Asher, who developed a kinaesthetic sensory system able to combine information and skills. The system was developed in order to permit learners to assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate[36]. In particular, he concentrated on two characteristics of first language acquisition. The first one is that children are exposed to a great deal of comprehensible input before beginning to speak; the second one is that early inputs occurs with physical manipulation and action language (Nunan, 2000).

In contrast, the *Silent Way* was a discovery learning approach devised by Gattegno (1972). The name of this method indicates how it works: the teacher is usually silent and leaves the students to talk and explore the language. Although this method is learner-centred, it is highly controlled and manipulative of the students (Nunan, 2000). A set of coloured rods and verbal commands are usually used at the beginning of the lesson[37].

Finally, another approach that developed at about the same time is *Suggestopedia.* It was developed by Lozon, who believed that the human mind can memorise a great number of notions under appropriate conditions. There are provided in a state of deep relaxation bordering on hypnosis, which can be reached by students through yoga techniques of relaxation and rhythmic breathing. Music is also essential for the achievement of this state, as it is supposed to activate the left hemisphere of the brain and consequently it facilitates 'holistic' learning (Nunan, 2000). Besides the

[36] http://moramodules.com/ALMMethods.htm#Natural
[37] http://moramodules.com/ALMMethods.htm#Community

characteristics that each method has, it is important to note that these methods are all grammar-based; classroom contents were mainly based on analyses of language forms with little attention to real-life communication (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011).

Still nowadays, the role of grammar in the language classroom is uncertain due to the development of communicative approaches to language teaching, along with theoretical and empirical insights from second language acquisition research (Griffiths, 2012). However, grammar-based approaches are still used in many foreign language classrooms. A well known approach is the one called PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) in which language is learned by "processing information available through input and then accessed for subsequent comprehension and production" (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011: 4). Presentation, practice and production, which are the three activities which make up this method, play a key role in the acquisition of language.

3.4.2. The second language acquisition tradition

The recognition of the inadequacies of approaches that focused exclusively on grammar learning led to a shift to to a focus on meaning and language use in communicative contexts. Compared to the other methods, these are more recent and focus on substantial empirical research into language development. The best known proponent of the acquisition tradition is Krashen (1981), who set out the central principles of the tradition. One of these principles suggests that there are two visible mental processes that operate in second language development. One refers to the acquisition process; the other is the learning process which helps the learner cope with the target language in the short term. According to the supporters of these methods, the acquisition process of the second language is very similar to what goes on in first language acquisition and hence all learners should develop bilingual

competence in the language (Nunan, 2000).

The Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching is an approach which is hard to define, particularly at the levels of design and classroom procedures and in consequence several models for syllabus design with different central elements have developed (Cerezal Sierra, 1995). However, as the name of the approach says, the aim of this approach is to develop students' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) and it focuses on the semantic aspects of language; moreover, language is seen as a social phenomenon. Learners are stimulated to conceive messages that are appropriate to the particular context, which can be a socio, psycho, cultural situation, and subsequently being able to take part in discourse, negotiate rules and conventions during communication and interact with the other members of the conversation (Cerezal Sierra, 1995). Canale and Swain (1980 in Cerezal Sierra, 1995) define the communicative approach as composed of four parts: linguistic competence, discourse competence, socio-linguistic competence and strategic competence. This method brought innovations mainly to applied linguistics, and has helped to develop the language teaching by producing contributions, such as: an increasing concern with the meaning potential of language, realistic and motivating language practice, a use of learner's knowledge and experience with their mother tongue, better level of language reflection and awareness (McDonough and Shaw, 1993 in Cerezal Sierra, 1995). However, some unresolved problems of this approach favoured the diffusion of criticism, but despite that, it continues to be popular, particularly in Europe, where this approach has been refined and the Task-based Language Learning (TBLL) has been developed. TBLL focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to carry out meaningful tasks using the target language: activities that are meaning-focused are similar in some way to real-life activities (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011).

3.4.3 Focus on Form

In recent years, language-teaching professionals have become increasingly aware that teaching approaches had to focus on grammar as well as on meaning. The *focus on form* approach, which was put forward by Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998), seemed the solution to the problems presented by traditional approaches and by purely communicative approaches.

Focus on form instruction is a type of instruction that

> on the one hand, holds up the importance of communicative language teaching principles such as authentic communication and student-centeredness, and, on the other hand, maintains the value of the occasional and overt study of problematic L2 grammatical forms, which is more reminiscent of non communicative teaching (Long, 1991 in Poole, 2005).

This approach should expose students to oral and written discourse that mirrors real-life with the help of different activities (i.e. interviews, writing letters), integrating them with explanations of grammar rules (Poole, 2005).

Long distinguished *a focus on form* (FonF) from *a focus on forms* (FonFs) and *a focus on meaning. Focus on forms* is the traditional approach. Course design starts with the language to be taught. It is based on the assumption that "language consists of a series of grammatical forms that can be acquired sequentially and additively" (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011: 10). Wilkins (1976) named this the synthetic approach to syllabus design as the parts for use in communication are synthesized by learners, who master each linguistic item in synthetic syllabuses one at a time (Long, 1997).

A typical response to frustration with the focus on forms has been a radical pendulum swing: *focus on meaning.* The starting point is the learner and learning processes: learners analyse language inductively and arrive at its underlying grammar (Long, 1997). Thus, "it emphasizes pure meaning-based activities with no attention to form" (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011: 10). Lessons are based purely on conversation and learners

are presented with gestalt, comprehensible samples of communicative L2 use (Poole, 2005).

Both focus on forms and focus on meaning have problems, which lead to a further approach: *focus on form*. This focuses on linguistic forms in the context of meaningful communication (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). It is learner-centred in a radical, psycholinguistic sense as it respects the learner's internal syllabus (Poole, 2005). According to Long (2000), this approach is more effective than the others and captures "the strength of an analytic approach while dealing with its limitations" (Long, 2000 in Nassaji and Fotos, 2011: 10); while the FonFs consists of teaching linguistic forms with little concern with communicative use, focus on meaning does not enough analyse the grammatical structure and is not based on learner needs (Long, 2000 in Nassaji and Fotos, 2011: 10). However, Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998) do not guarantee that:

> focus on form instruction will lead to a specific level of L2 grammatical development within a certain time frame, presumably because of factors related to quality of instruction, intensity of instruction, and the stages of morphosyntactic development through which L2 learners must pass (Lightbown and Spada, 1999 in Poole, 2005: 49).

Although further research will be needed to prove the effectiveness of *focus on form* instruction, it seems that this approach is likely to meet its instructional objectives in settings. It is important that diverse cultural and socioeconomic circumstances are taken into consideration in order to determine whether or not this instruction is appropriate for different groups of learners (Poole, 2005).

3.4.4 The Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) approach

Looking at the analysis of the methods presented above, it is evident that the

language teaching literature does not give enough information about the contents to teach, although, recently, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which describes both learning another (content) subject through the medium of a foreign language and learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject, has become more and more widespread. It has been found to be effective in all sectors of education and the aim is that the learner gains new knowledge about the 'non-language' subject while encountering, using and learning the foreign language (European Commission, 2002).

The analysis of classroom transcripts of lessons, which are anchored on different methods, also demonstrates that generally similarities outweigh differences. Furthermore, these 'methods' approaches to language teaching present some shortcomings, among them two are particularly interesting. Firstly, they are not based on the perceptions of students which emerge in the classroom (close observation and analysis of what actually happens in the classroom are not examined), but they exist as 'packages of precepts' and as a consequence they may not work well; secondly, the approaches may provoke an estrangement between language and contexts (Nunan, 2000). Nonetheless, this does not imply that they are completely fruitless. In fact, they include some aspects which can be used into one's classroom practice, but all of them need to be treated with caution. Methods need to be subsumed within the larger concerns of classroom management and organisation (Nunan, 2000).

It becomes clear that teaching methods, strategies, approaches and objectives in the special education classroom are different from in the traditional classroom. As has been noted in the second chapter, students with learning disabilities have problems that are very diversified; for some the problem may be simply motivational, for others the problem may behavioural, emotional, cognitive and so on and so forth. As a consequence, the UK government started to pay attention to the strategies and approaches to be used with students with special educational needs. Since the 1997

Green Paper, *Excellence for All Children,* it has undertaken a firm commitment to the high quality of education for learners with difficulties and has recognised that

> building the capacity of teachers and schools to teach pupils with a diverse range of SEN is key to raising the achievement of these pupils (European Commission, 2005).

To this end, it commissioned a study in order to define and spot the effectiveness of the different approaches and strategies used to teach pupils with the full range of SEN (Davis and Florian, 2004). These will be presented in the next chapter.

However, as discussed in the first part of this chapter, students with special educational needs are included in the mainstream secondary schools and as a result, quality foreign language teaching practice requires methods and approaches which need to be equally good for non-SEN students (European Commission, 2005). Studies have shown that direct instruction using a multisensory structured language methodology (MSL) benefits students with foreign language disabilities (Sparks, 1998). The MSL approach involves the simultaneous use of students' visual, auditory and kinaesthetic channels. This allows learners to choose what activities to follow and do their very best and in consequence it permits students to experience success instead of failure, and increases their motivation (McColl, 2000). It helps students understand better the structure of language, it facilitates them in their language learning and makes it possible to teach the grammar and vocabulary of the foreign language; its sound-symbol system, and language patterns (syntactic, semantic, phonological, orthographic) are also explained to students (Schneider and Crombie, 2003). Instruction should always let students experience feelings of success: they need to be challenged by various activities in the classroom and motivated to achieve success so that their hard work may be rewarded.

3.4.5 Individual Education Plan

The different forms of support are not sufficient to educate students with special educational needs. All of them have an individual education plan (IEP) which helps them to succeed in the process of language learning (McEachern-Kelly, 2008). Success for the special needs student requires a focus on individual achievement, individual progress, and individual learning. This requires specific, directed, individualized, intensive remedial instruction of individual students who are struggling.[38] Hence, the creation of the IEP, which is internationally accepted and underpinned by law in the UK (National Council for Special Education, 2006), which determines the specific skills that the student should develop[39.] It is a planning, teaching and reviewing tool, which makes it possible to adapt the educational interventions to the individual characteristics of the students in order to help them to develop in the best possible way (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). Thus, the fundamental principle is that of "settling" the teaching practices with the particular learning needs of each student. The amount of adaptation and support will vary from student to student (National Council for Special Education, 2006).

The IEP has been proved to be efficient in different aspects of the learning process, and in particular it has been functional in the achieving of equal educational opportunities and in the support of the individual choices (ISFOL, 2001). It is developed through the collaboration of the school, parents, the student and other relevant personnel if necessary. Individual plans may need to incorporate various strategies which can involve adaptations to the physical environment and to the content and delivery of the lesson, modifications to resources and materials, use of equipment or assistance technology and provision of support personnel (National Disability Authority, 2005). However, the number of different approaches and strategies employed to respond to the full range of children's special educational

[38] http://www.understanding-learning-disabilities.com/teaching-special-education.html
[39] http://triplehelixblog.com/2011/08/methods-for-educating-special-needs-students/

needs is enormous and as a consequence the description and the analysis of all of them would be too complex a task.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Inclusivity, language teaching and students with SEN

As we have seen in the previous chapters, there have been many attempts to reform the UK education system, but only in the last decade have students with special educational needs been included in mainstream schools. Hence, the definition and conception of special educational needs have also changed and provisions dealing with them have moved from a medical-deficit model of “disability” towards a social inclusion model. This has implied an adaptation of school policies to meet the needs of pupils with difficulties, besides the need to find ways to empower learners to learn together in mainstream schools whether they have a learning difficulty, a physical disability, a behavioural or an emotional difficulty. The school staff had to deal with “increasing levels of indiscipline and persistent low-level disruption” which required a less strict behavioural policy in schools (Munn et al., 2000).

Despite the great effort made by the UK government to promote 'inclusion for all', confusion and uncertainty still surround this concept, especially due to the fact that schools, which have been characterised by a policy of segregation, have suddenly changed and started to include and integrate all pupils regardless of their disability,

gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural-linguistic background (SEED, 2003). A great number of schools started using a system of 'setting', where students were assigned to different classes according to their attainment in that subject; bottom, middle and top sets were created and the vast majority of pupils with SEN were in the so-called bottom sets (Hamill and Boyd, 2001-2002 in McEachern-Kelly, 2008). While some researchers may agree that setting gives support to student "by facilitating teaching and learning, targeting of resources and the pace of work in classrooms", others believe that teaching pupils in mixed-ability classes is the most appropriate way to support them (Hamill and Clark, 2005 in McEachern-Kelly, 2008).

Another issue to keep in mind is that all teachers suddenly became teachers of pupils with SEN (DfES, 2001); new teaching styles and contexts were required to ensure that students reach their potential, and provisions to support lower achievers and pupils with learning difficulties were introduced in order to facilitate their success in the modern foreign language classrooms and all in the other subjects. In order to achieve inclusivity in classrooms, Ainscow (1997) identified

> the need for additional support, effective leadership, involvement of staff, a commitment to collaborative planning, effective co-ordination strategies, attention to the possible benefits of enquire and reflection and a policy for staff development as conditions for inclusive education (Ainscow, 1997 in Davis and Florian, 2003: 34).

Similarly, Florian (1998) suggested a set of conditions which need to be taken into consideration to meet special educational needs:

> an opportunity for pupil participation in decision-making processes; a positive attitude about the learning abilities of all pupils; teacher knowledge about learning difficulties; skilled use of specific teaching methods; parent and teacher support (in Florian, 2005: 35).

Besides this, we do not know if this situation of inclusivity has adverse consequences for the children's academic achievement, behaviour and attitudes and understanding of disability as no relevant studies have been made on UK schools. Researchers only say a little about the school processes that have facilitated effective inclusive practices but nothing about how the 'level' of inclusion in a school influences the students' achievements (Dyson et al., 2004).

However, the literature offers some studies that have considered the potential impact of inclusion on the behaviour, attitude and friendships of children with and without SEN. It has been found that the integration of students with SEN in language classes did not cause an increase in behavioural problems (Tapasak & Walther-Thomas, 1999 in Dyson et al., 2004), but, actually, studies report that the social skills of students without SEN have improved thanks to inclusion. In addition, an increased acceptance, understanding and tolerance of individual differences have been shown by students at the inclusion-based school, in comparison with students attending non-inclusion schools who hold more negative perceptions of diversity[40]. Positive effects of inclusion can be also seen in the relationships between classmates: friendships created between students without and with difficulties lead the former to improve in areas of self-concept, social cognition, acceptance of others, advancement of individual principles and tolerance of human differences (Dyson et al., 2004). On the other hand, school inclusivity did not have a good effect on pupil attainment, calling into question some of the more optimistic advocacy of inclusion; but the connection between inclusivity and attainment is very small at school level and highly variable between schools and the degree of variation at school level suggests that effects may be either negative or positive (Dyson et al., 2004).

Regarding language teaching, it is worth noting that despite the fact that there are many suggested justifications for excluding learners with special educational needs

[40] Milson, 2006 in http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/26319/

from modern foreign languages learning, (i.e. the fact that some pupils may have learning difficulties which imply that they need time to settle in the classroom and listen, others may be dyslexic and the learning of foreign languages may be very difficult for them and may require more time), the efficiency of modern foreign language learning has been stressed. In fact, there are many reasons why students, including those with special educational needs, should learn a second language. According to Bovair (2002), the learning of a foreign language is very helpful to develop pupil self-esteem, pupil ability to communicate in an other language, pupil capabilities in their own language and it is useful to learn about the countries in which the language is spoken, and to encourage positive attitudes towards different cultures (Bovair, 2002). Furthermore, other researchers agree that the language learning process is challenging but also helpful for students to appreciate different communities and cultures in the modern world (McKeown, 2004). Some students with SEN excel in languages and these pupils may have many strengths; similarly Wilson (2003) argues that they enjoy modern foreign lessons and they see it as a fun and practical activity (Wilson, 2003).

However, they require much support as they find learning a new language very challenging (McKeown 2004). Hence, in order to meet the needs of every single child with SEN, it is essential to formulate an appropriate curriculum which sets suitable learning challenges, responds to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals. This implies that the different needs, abilities and individual differences of the students need to be taken into consideration, as well as the different learning styles, interests and resources, in order to enable students to learn as much as they can. This means

> giving them the opportunity to learn in their preferred styles, rather than always outside of them, which can happen in the interests of keeping classrooms paced to the majority or to a standard curriculum (Ehrman,

Leaver, Oxford, 2003: 324).

In the following sections, some suggestions for favouring individual differences, in addition to some types of adaptation of teaching to individual differences are briefly discussed.

4.2 Suggestions for favouring individual differences

As we have already seen in the first chapter, foreign language classes provide opportunities to learn a language, to develop students' study skills and also to improve their social skills, self-knowledge and self-esteem, supporting adolescents' growth as individuals. Motivation and independence are also important factors which need to be promoted consistently through a positive class atmosphere, which also increases interest and enjoyment of foreign language study, and diminishes anxiety. Although there is little research that takes account of the diversity of the learning context, this issue is the first one to be discussed. It is followed by brief explanations of how anxiety can be reduced and elucidation of the importance of motivation. Subsequently, learning styles, independence and ethos are presented.

4.2.1 Learning Context

A welcoming and positive environment is essential for learning a foreign language in an effective way, especially for students with foreign language disabilities. In order to create one, it is important that students get to know each other and follow the instruction given by the teacher who should establish group norms: rules or standards regarding behaviour that are essential for the efficient functioning of the

group (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997). Another element which makes the learning experience more positive is group cohesion, which is encouraged by sharing group history and fostering positive relations between the students. In this case, teachers should act as efficient facilitators, characterised by empathic ability, acceptance of the students and congruence (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997).

Finally, acceptance of difference, including students with special educational needs, is probably the most important factor in creating a positive atmosphere. All students learn in different ways, they have different aims and may be more or less motivated and enthusiastic about learning a foreign language; it is important to make sure that students are helped to cope with their problems.

4.2.2 Reducing Anxiety

As we have already seen, anxiety is an affective factor which influences students' performance, including those with good foreign language skills. Anxiety may lead students, including those with special educational needs, to underestimate their abilities and in turn lead to decreased effort and achievement. Hence, it is important to consider practices which could possibly reduce its negative effects. These include the creation of a less stressful learning context, or help for students to learn to cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situation. In order to do so, some relaxation exercises can be used, in addition to some encouraging words, giving positive reinforcement and empathy which could raise learners' level of motivation and effort (Gardner, 1985: 53). Finally, group work may be an other strategy to create a more favourable attitude towards foreign language learning, as students, with and without special needs, feel less embarrassed and self-consciousness than when they talk to the whole class.

4.2.3 Motivation

Motivation is an important factor which affects students' performance. It should be taken into consideration by teachers, who although cannot always motivate pupils to learn a second language, but can increase the learners' motivation. In order to do so, teachers need to explain to students, including those with special educational needs, their personal strengths and weaknesses, show them how to asses their work and how to reach the goals by their own; positive feedback has been found to increase motivation as it enhances perceived competence. Complimenting and congratulating students for having done well also promotes feelings of competence and intrinsic motivation (Deci et al. 1991). Explaining to students that a second language can be "an exciting mental challenge, a career enhancer, and a vehicle to cultural awareness" may be a way to motivate them (Oxford and Shearin 1994: 24). Practice in class of real-life situations where the foreign language is needed may also be important.

However, student motivation differs one from another and may change over time, along with aims (Oxford and Shearin 1994: 24), and given the wide variety of difficulties faced by pupils with SEN, there is not a general answer for all situations (McLagan, 1994); this is why modern foreign language teachers need to keep finding new ideas and resources in order to stimulate, motivate and inspire all pupils in their classes, including those with special educational needs.

4.2.4 Learning Styles

It has been argued that while some pupils respond to a visual stimulus, some have strong auditory memory and others prefer practical learning. Some pupils prefer using the visual channel for learning and benefit from the use of pictures, colours, symbols and maps; others prefer using the auditory channel, learning through listening,

reading aloud, talking and restoring memories of situations involving speech (Moilanen 2002). Regarding people with learning disabilities, it has been shown that they may prefer kinaesthetic learning which means that the body is involved to process information and therefore they learn by moving around (Moilanen, 2002). The arrangement of words into songs, rhymes or poems are techniques that may facilitate the language learning for lower achievers and pupils with SEN (Holmes, 1994). Thus, a classroom should provide variety and balance in the diverse types of experiences, and multisensory approaches to learning using visuals, smell, touch and action should be employed (Holmes, 2002).

In addition, learners may show a preference for working alone or in a group. As Sutler (1967, reported by Lesser, 1972 in Moradi, 2002) found in her studies, students with higher affiliation needs, which are defined as "the desire to establish and maintain close, friendly interpersonal relations" (Lesser, 1972: 305), work better in a paired, interpersonal setting, while pupils with low affiliation needs perform better through working alone (Moradi, 2002).

Learners can also be divided into those who are analytical and relational. The former are good at tasks that require analytical, linear, sequential, and rational thinking; while the relational ones are those who are good at tasks that require relational, holistic, intuitive, concrete, and emotional thinking (Kinsella, 1996: 25). The environment for analytical learners should be quiet and directed by people whose authority they trust. Instead, the environment for the relational individuals should be lively, surrounded by talk, music, friends with whom they can socialise while studying. Concluding, learning styles have a great impact on students' performance as pupils learn more when they enjoy themselves. Hence, being aware of their learning style is important both for students and also for their teacher.

4.2.5 Student Responsibility and Independence

It is important that students take responsibility for their own learning. Student independence can be promoted in different ways: providing students with opportunities for self-assessment, analysing their personal learning styles, teaching them different kinds of learning strategies, allowing students real choices, giving them positions of genuine authority and encouraging student contributions, peer teaching and project work (Dörnyei, 2001). Teachers need to determine how precise instructions they are going to give depending on the level of independence the students are used to (McColl, 2000).

4.2.6 Ethos

It has been found that a whole school ethos that promotes modern foreign language learning is crucial in the development of languages for all schools; in fact, ethos and culture play an important role in the foreign languages classes among students with special educational needs (McEachern-Kelly, 2008). In order to make the learning experience easier for students with special needs, teachers could create supportive structures, through routines for the beginning and ending of lessons, using the same greetings each lesson, explaining practices and reinforcing routines and plan carefully for social interaction in pair work and group work (McKeown, 2004).

4.3 Adaptation of teaching

The adaptation of teaching to individual differences can be achieved in several ways but changes in aims or methods or materials are always required. Different types of adaptation of education have been proposed by various researchers, such as

Cronbach (1967) who suggested different patterns of modification involving teachers, parents and the whole educational system (see table 1 for the various changes of Cronbach model).

Educational Goals	Instructional Methods	Possible Modifications to meet Individual Needs
Schooling Fixed	Fixed	1a. Alter duration of program or course by sequential selection. 1b. Train to criterion on any skill or topic, hence alter duration of instruction
Options	Fixed within an option	2. Determine for each student her/his prospective adult role and provide a curriculum for that role
Fixed within a course or program	Alternatives provided	3a. Provide remedial adjuncts to fixed "main track" instruction 3b. Teaching different pupils by different methods.

Table 1: Patterns of Educational Adaptation to Individual Differences
Adopted from Cronbach (1967 in Moradi, 2002)

The method of adaptation of teaching to learning should be implicit and intuitive: teachers should be sensitive and match the behaviour of students to their individual differences, and "need to find the weaknesses and strengths in their students in order to adjust both the form and the timing of their instructions" (Moradi, 2002: 9).

Nevertheless, although it has been found that addressing different aspects of learning is likely to be useful for all students regardless of their ability, the differences among children and their characteristics may be problematic to accommodate in a classroom. As Florian and Hegarty (2004) state:

> the term SEN covers an array of problems from those arising from particular impairments to those related to learning and behavioural difficulties experienced by some learners some of the time...Many people

> are disabled by an impairment but they may or may not be *handicapped* by the condition...However, there are some conditions and impairments that are known to create barriers to learning unless accommodations are made (Florian and Hegarty, 2004 in Davis and Florian, 2004: 34).

Nevertheless, as we have seen in the previous chapter, different strategies and methodologies have been used by teachers in order to increase the inclusion of pupils in the mainstream language classrooms. Some argumentations about them are below presented.

4.4 Strategies and methodologies

It has been suggested that language-teaching methodologies have come and gone and each leaving traces in the new approaches: all of them have introduced innovations at a given moment. Furthermore, all methods have at least two things in common: their belief to be the best one, and a set of prescriptions that teachers have to follow (Cerezal Sierra, 1995). While at the beginning of language teaching history languages were taught focusing on grammar, later on teaching of languages focused on the learning of the oral language. The role of grammar in guidelines on modern foreign language teaching and learning has been a lot of debate: it provides “an important link with the learning of the mother tongue”, but it has been suggested that opportunities for practice and the knowledge of vocabulary are essential for making students recognise and use some familiar structures correctly (McColl, 2003).

Given the wide variety of difficulties faced by pupils with special educational needs, there is unlikely to be an easy methodology for all situations (McLagan, 1994 in Cerezal Sierra, 1995) and because of the wideness of this field, it is difficult to map the effectiveness of different approaches and strategies used to respond to the full range of children's special educational needs; teaching strategies and approaches are

associated with categories of special educational needs, but not necessarily related to them (Davis and Florian, 2004). Thus, teaching should be a dynamic and reflective process, which implies permanent interaction among the curriculum, teachers, students, activities, methodologies and instructional materials. Teachers should design the right content and tasks for students according to their abilities and in consequence they constantly need to analyse what happens in the classrooms. They need to identify the barriers, which are not only linguistic but may be also more basic, and deal with them in order to teach effectively. Teaching is an activity which "involves making judgements and taking decisions, based on analysis of what Schon calls 'reflection-in-action'" (Davis and Florian, 2004: 36). In other words teachers need to

> draw on their knowledge and engage in what Huberman (1993) and Hargreaves (1997) call 'tinkering': [...] they often experiment and try out ideas possibly informed by knowledge that they have about the range of theories and ideas that are available and guided by their own beliefs and principles (Davis and Florian, 2004: 36).

It has been found that one model of learning, which informs and justifies one model of teaching, is less effective compared to a more comprehensive model and therefore a more complete instructional approach (Farrell, 1997).

According to Davis and Florian (2004), a multi-method approach is promising as it has been proved that a combination of strategies produce more powerful effects than a single strategy solution (Speece & Keogh, 1996; Nelson and Cammarata, 1996). This means promoting attainment through direct strategies, promoting 'active learning', participation and engagement, and responding to personalised learning styles and preferences. Such a personalised approach gives students the right individualised support. Furthermore, Davis and Florian (2004) have developed some effective promising strategies for each of the four 'areas of need' as defined in the 2001 SEN Code of Practice. The 'areas of need' are: communication and interaction, cognition

and learning, behaviour, emotional and social development, sensory and/or physical.
In the following paragraphs the promising teaching strategies for each 'area of need' offered by Davis and Florian (2004) will be presented. First, a brief analysis of the three principal theoretical perspectives which guzzle the strategies and approaches has to be reported. These are: behavioural, social constructivist and ecological perspectives.

The behaviour theoretical perspective models look at the rules through which children behave. Cognitive behaviour approaches look at whether the children/students can understand why and how they behave the way they do. The approach looks for success and positive progress in teaching and learning but is criticised for oversimplifying complex and invisible processes in the brain by only looking at the more obvious and measurable ones. Also the students who are positively rewarded could then rely on rewards and benefits for their academic and behavioural success (Davis and Florian, 2004).
Social constructivist models show the child to seek the knowledge for themselves by problem solving and gaining satisfaction by their experiences. This may encourage further learning and greater understanding in new or foreign situations. Sociocultural theory is where the child learns through a social group or communities activities (Davis and Florian, 2004).
Ecological theoretical perspectives operate within a concept of 'nested systems' and they focus on the interaction between learners and their environment: learners, who are situated in the centre of the system, communicate at different levels which compose the system. The classroom is indicated as the micro level, while school and society, which bot do not involve the child directly, are macro level.
Teaching strategies often focus at the micro level, but also broader levels are taken into consideration: attention of the role of school and community culture are hence favoured (Dsvis and Florian, 2004).

4.4.1 Communication and interaction area of need

The literature individualised promising approaches to language teaching, which have been then examined in deep by Davis and Florian (2004) in their scoping research.

Placement, intervention and curriculum differentiated provision using highly individualised, child specific program, have been taken into consideration by reports of approaches and teaching strategies. Studies of Davis and Florian (2004), however, has found that forms of formal and informal communication enabling systems lead to a more open inclusive centred approach. In particular, for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, there are various comprehensive and specific teaching approaches.

Studies made by Drudy (2001), Jordan et al. (1998) and Siegel (2000), current methods include: applied behaviour analysis, aromatherapy, art therapy, behaviour modification, computer assisted learning, daily life therapy, diet, drama therapy, EarlyBird, facilitated communication, floor time, Geoffrey Walden approach, Hanen programme, holding therapy, Makaton signing and symbols, massage, the Miller method, music therapy, musical interaction therapy, option method, picture exchange communication system (PECS), sensory integration, Sherborne movement, social stories, speech and language therapy, treatment and education of autistic and communication handicapped children.

However, the literature in this field lacks of evidence about effectiveness of the majority of the above quoted approaches except for a few. These comprehend the facilitated communication and auditory integration training which have resulted inefficient (Drudy, 2001), while sensory integration and daily life therapy have a research base with mixed results. Finally, there are two main approaches that have

provided promising outcomes: applied behaviour analysis (ABA), treatment and education of autistic, and communication handicapped children.

4.4.2 Cognition and learning area of need

The literature lacks of appropriate strategies and approaches for students with cognitive and learning difficulties. There is evidence about the necessity for integrated teaching of different aspects of reading, spelling and writing too. Repetitive and cumulative learning opportunities combined with meta-cognitive development, well informed teachers, professional collaboration and other forms of support are needed in order to allow struggling readers to catch up with their peers. Also, specific programs to mark the individual differences of each student are required and the appropriate teaching seems to lie in careful and ongoing assessment linked with teaching.

Davis and Florian (2004) highlight the fact that effective strategies should include the use of 'procedural facilitators' like planning sheets, writing frames, story mapping and teacher modelling of cognitive strategies, which should carefully be utilised.

4.4.3 Behavioural, emotional and social development area of need

Students struggling with behavioural, emotional and social development disabilities are educated trough cognitive-behavioural approaches which teach them how to regulate their behaviour with self-monitoring, self-instruction, anger management and self-reinforcement skills. Studies in this field have concluded that combinations of approaches may have a bigger impact on students.

4.4.4 Sensory and /or physical area of need

Due to the immensity of researches in this field, there are approaches which often dispute the value of other approaches. Unfortunately there is very little systematic research which deals with the effectiveness of approaches.

As Davis and Florian (2004) state, strategies and approaches which emphasise the importance of proving opportunity for developing skills and social interactions are necessary. And also the literature needs strategies and approaches to guarantee the development of the child's independence.

In addition, there are also various systems employed to support the teaching and learning of foreign languages to students with special educational needs. These can be classified as concerning views relating to: equal opportunities, training, social inclusion and technology.

In the UK, decisions concerning the type and amount of support offered to pupils in modern foreign language departments are taken at whole school level and as a consequence there is no uniformity of provision at national or local level. Evidence of inequality among schools is visible in the number of students in a classroom; class sizes vary according to school policy (McEachern-Kelly, 2008).

Training and catering are offered to teachers in order to follow students with special educational needs more effectively. In addition, teachers are helped by language assistants who are also trained in the field of MFL teaching and learning to working with students with special needs (McEachern-Kelly, 2008).

Language learning training should follow some established criteria (Moradi, 2002). Wenden (1986) proposed four such criteria: explicitness of purpose, content of training, evaluation and integration. The first one refers to the fact that "the learners

should be clearly informed of the purposes of the training and the uses of a particular technique under consideration. They should also be given guidelines on when and how to use the technique" (Moradi, 2002: 11). Furthermore, the content of the training is a crucial element as well as the evaluation; the teacher needs to make sure the trainees understand and implement the learnt tasks. According to Wenden (1986), learners should cross three phases due to training: 'task improvement', 'maintenance' and 'transfer'. Initially, performance should improve, then performance should find a stability and finally the 'transfer' change which refers to the ability to use the strategies and techniques at different times. The fourth criteria alludes "to the extent to which learner training and language learning go together" (Moradi, 2002: 13).

It is important that teachers oppose discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming communities, build an inclusive society, and achieve education for all. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties, in fact, may cause problems in the language classes, denying the opportunity to behaved hard working pupils to achieve their full potential (McEachern-Kelly, 2008).

Regarding technology, it has been proved that students with SEN like to learn with technology and this implies an increasing of motivation of modern foreign language learners. It is generally recognised that Communications Technology (ICT) has a natural affinity with the learning of foreign languages; it can play an important role in the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as well as the transferable skills such as independent learning and the use of reference materials (Deaney et al., 2003). Computers, in fact, can be used in a number of different ways and it makes tasks differentiated (McEachern-Kelly, 2008).

Nevertheless, researchers and teachers are constantly seeking methods and 'promising approaches' to motivate, encourage and inspire all students to learn a

second language and keep them interested. 'Promising strategies' may include:

> developing thinking skills, responding to learning styles and multiple intelligences, using ICT to support learning, listening and responding to pupils' views, developing peer tutoring and group work, enhancing motivation and self-esteem, enhancing the role of the creative arts, incorporating so-called 'authentic' learning experiences, linking learning in school with learning outside school and the re-establishing the role of extra-curricular activities such as sport, clubs and outdoor activities (McEachern-Kelly, 2008: 37).

Existing practices and new approaches need to be experimented, but factors such as "time to work on the innovation; philosophical acceptance and perception of the importance of the intervention practice, and teachers' perception of their technical competence and ability to influence student learning" (Davis and Florian, 2003: 36) affect the research on implementation that results restricted.

However, new research on innovation suggests that approaches, which have been validated by the literature, are not always used by teachers as intended in practice (Woodward, Gallagher and Reith, 2001). As Rubin (2007) says:

> while more and more teachers are recognising the importance of a variety of factors that affect learners, many still adhere to an older modal that defines their job as proving information in a fixed fashion, regardless of learner differences (Rubin, 2007 in Griffiths, 2012: 13).

Conclusion

A considerable amount of literature has been published and relevant information gathered, evaluated, and finally put together to create a whole that aims to see if students with special educational needs should be included in mainstream language classes.

The aim of this thesis was to offer an answer at the question: “Should all students with special educational needs be included in mainstream language structure?”

In the first chapter the individual differences have been analysed. They play an important role in the acquisition of a second language. The more we learn about them, the more complex the field becomes; the various factors “are not unitary characteristics, but are really ambiguous composites of multiple factors” (Ehrman et al., 2003: 325) which can increase the success margin of teaching and can enhance the learning of students. However, “what is universal and what is individual is, indeed, a challenging mystery to unravel” as well as “how individuals learn languages, how and why they undertake and succeed in language study” (Ehrman et al., 2003: 325).

The second chapter discussed the term of special educational needs and then analysed the main areas of children with difficulties, followed by a short description of the different supports. Due to the considerable number of needs, common special educational needs categories have been created in order to provide for consistency of SEN management information, and are needed for use across all the boards and the school sector. The collection and recording of standard information about children with special educational needs

> is an essential factor in special educational planning and policy development, identification of current and future funding needs and for monitoring trends, outcomes of initiatives and interventions for pupils with special educational needs (Department of Education, 2006: 1).

Thus, while the different areas of special needs have been presented in order to have a general vision of the children who have been taken into consideration in this thesis, the various supports have been presented in order to show how their foreign language learning can be facilitated. All the children deserve the same chances and same educational opportunities “but, however, the systems that should support them and their families fail, putting bureaucratic barriers in their way and failing to address their true needs” (Department foe Education, 2012: 5).

In the third chapter, two issues have been presented: the first part has offered a brief historical overview of the developments in MFL teaching and learning and the developments in the provision for pupils with SEN in the UK; while in the second part of the third chapter, the different strategies and approaches have been presented. It has been claimed that there is a gap in the literature about the effectiveness of the methods and approaches used by teachers. However, learning disabilities are very much present in the UK secondary schools and teachers need to be able to provide support for students who are having difficulties. The historical overview has provided the background to current policy of provision of modern foreign languages: the policy of inclusion. This policy has permitted students with educational needs to 'enter the world as equals', as “inclusive education is essential to achieve social equity and is a constituent element of lifelong learning” (UNESCO, 2009). However, the inclusive system is a problematic and political process, which:

- requires changes in school ethos;
- involves teachers who have acquired commitment;
- requires changes in the given curriculum;
- involves recognition of moral and political rights of pupils to inclusive education;
- recognises that students with special needs are valued and that their achievements should be celebrated;

- it acknowledgements the importance of difference rather than sameness or normality;
- it requires struggle (Wang, 2009: 155).

The understanding of the current policy of provision of modern foreign language for all pupils provides a baseline for the understanding of the different language teaching methods which have constantly changed over the years. The methods range from grammar-translation to audio-lingual to communicative, in addition to the others. However, learners do not use just a learning method, but a variety, which implies that methods need to be flexible, ready to adapt to the situations and need to follow the individual characteristics of each learner in order to achieve success in language learning (Griffiths, 2012). Thus, the identification of a universal approach to language teaching has not been found yet, and never will be: "individuals are infinitely variable, and any attempt at a one-rule-for-all type conclusion is unlikely to be universally applicable"(Griffiths, 2012: 276). It is the teacher's task to adapt teaching to the students' necessities and abilities and make sure students with extra needs receive the adequate support. However, as Harkin and Davis (1996) argue, there are many difficulties that teachers need to face "when attempting to change long established patterns of classroom behaviour", and point out

> the benefits of collaborating with colleagues who act as critical friends as a means of encouraging reflection on practice and experimentation (in Davis and Florian, 2003: 35).

Several tests and studies have been conducted in order to find answers about the effectiveness of inclusive systems and hence the fact if students with special educational needs should be included in general educational classrooms.

Hanline (1993), for example, analysed three preschoolers with profound disabilities and found out that they were socially and communicatively beneficing from the full

inclusion (Wang, 2009). A further study (Cole, 1991) examined the social effect produced by schools which used an inclusive system and found that children progressed in social skill development. Furthermore, it has been proved that inclusion enhances children's academic achievement through speech and language programs, getting higher academic achievements that those at special schools, improves parent-teacher communication and increases community acceptance of people with disabilities (Jenkinson, 1997).

Against these positive elements, inclusion has also brought some problems; Jenkinson (1997), for example, argues that too much attention and inappropriate resource are given to students with special educational needs. According to the studies of Carlberg and Kavale's (1980), inclusion fails in enhancing academic achievement with students with behavioural disabilities, emotional disabilities or learning disabilities; in fact, their study showed that the students with the above disabilities are better off than 61% of the students placed in a regular class. In this case, segregation is better than inclusion, but the results of this study cannot be applied to all the contexts.

Also Hornby (1999) analysed the inclusive system and noted that

> the level of inclusion, either locational, social, or functional, should be based on the needs of each child and the exigencies of the situation (Horby, 1999: 157).

Inclusion can enhance academic achievement of children through the proper learning environment and with the peer, who shall be considered as a person of the same age, status or ability. This induces teachers to be under considerable pressure to provide a suitable environment, including pace, learning styles, seating arrangements and individual attention. As Holmes (2002) suggests, teachers need to find activities which are accessible to low-attaining pupils and which stretch higher attaining pupils. Their attitudes change according to various interacting factors and to the level and history

of support that they receive in each Local Education Authority (LEA). Extra time, knowledge and skills are required to prepare adapted curriculum materials and implement special instructional techniques (Jenkinson, 1997).

In short, although integration has produced disadvantages, which can be resolved primarily through effective training of educators (Avramidis et al., 2000), inclusion appears to be an educational system worth striving for which should be treated with a more open and positive outlook (Jenkinson, 1997).

That said, one can argue that students with special educational needs should be included in mainstream language structure inasmuch in this way students would be accepted, integrated, felt part of the classroom and would not be discriminated. Many argue that segregated settings are inherently unjust. Furthermore the learning of a foreign language develops students' abilities, increase some affective factors which would help the learning of other subjects and help them appreciate different communities and cultures in the modern world.

However, there may be some complications when the number of students with learning difficulties in a classroom is high: teachers need to use special strategies and approaches for each of them and the “need” to employ an individual educational plan may cause difficulties in the standard learning language process; managing a wide range of pupil diversity is difficult for schools and for teachers.

In conclusion, although improvements are not always guaranteed due to the difficulties some of the students face, students with SEN who are to learn foreign languages should be included in mainstream language classrooms, which in order to make students obtain successful results, need to have: a learning environment which encourages and celebrates the teaching and learning; appropriate support for MFL teachers (including training in ICT); special approaches according to the individual differences of each student in order to make students obtain successful results.

Pupils with SEN can and do make good progress academically, personally and socially

when integrated (Ofsted, 2006).

Modern foreign languages are not only desirable for recreational, vocational and economic reasons, but they are a way to teach students other cultures and traditions: “education therefore [should] promote and facilitate MFL learning for all pupils in schools” (McEachern-Kelly, 2008: 225).

Bibliography

Ackerman, P. L. Sternberg, R. J., & Glaser, R. (eds.) (1989). *Learning and individual differences: Advances in theory and research*, New York, NY: W.H. Freeman and Co..

Arabski, J. & Wojtaszek, A. (2011). *Individual Learner Differences in SLA*, Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Arnold, J., (1999). *Affect in language learning,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Darling-Hammond, L., Austin, K., Cheung, M., & Austin D. M. (2003). *Annenberg / CPB course guide to The Learning Classroom: Theory Into Practice*, Stanford University, School of Education.

Banks, J., & McCoy, S. (2011). *A Study on the Prevalence of Special Educational Needs*, National Council for special education research report No.9.

Basic, L. (2011). *Speaking anxiety. An obstacle to second language learning?,* Hogskolan I gavle: Akademin fur utbildning och ekonomi.

Bates, E., Dale, P., & Thal, D. (1995). "Individual differences and their implications for theories of language development", in Fletcher, P. & MacWhinney, B. (eds.) *Handbook of Child Language*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 1-44.

Bell, S. M., & McCallum, R. S. (2012). "Do Foreign Language Learning, Cognitive, and Affective Variables Differ as a Function of Exceptionality Status and Gender?", International Education, Vol.42, Issue 1, pp. 85-105.

Bovair, K. (2002). "MFL, CILT's bulletin for secondary language teachers".(Autumn 2002), pg. 7. [Online] Available at: http://www.cilt.org.uk/pdf/pubs/bulletins/mfl_1.pdf.

Brown, H. D. (1973). "Affective variables in second language acquisition", Language Learning Research Club, University of Michigan, Vol.23, Issue II, pp. 231-244.

Brown, R.A. (2000). "Situation-Sensitivity and Self -Esteem in Japan and America." Bunkyo: University of Bunkyo.

Catalan, R. M. J. (2003). "Linking gender and second language education in a database", International journal of applied linguistics, Vol. 13 (1).

Cattell, R. (1987). *Intelligence: its Structure, Growth and Action*, Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Cave, T., Ludwar, J., & Williams, W. (2005). *Brain-based Learning*, Government of Alberta.

Cerezal Sierra, F. (1995). *Foreign language teaching methods: some issues and new moves*, Alcalà: Universidad de Alcalá.

Chapelle, C. A. (2013). *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Chowdhury, T. (2010). *The Impact of Intelligence on Second Language Acquisition*, Dhaka: BRAC University, Dhaka, Department of English and Humanities.

Cianciolo, A. T., & Sternberg, R. J. (2004). *Intelligence: a brief history*, Oxford: Engelska Blackwell Publishers.

Cleeton, L. (2000). *Individual differences in learning strategies and external representation,* Birmingham: School of Education of the University of Birmingham.

Closs, A. (2000). *Education of Children With Medical Conditions*, London: David Fulton.

Cook, V. (2001). *Second language learning and language teaching* (3rd edn.). New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Cooper, P. (2001). *We Can Work It Out: What Works in Education for Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Outside Mainstream Classrooms?*, Essex: Barnardo's.

Crookes, G., & Schmidt R. W. (1991). "Motivation: Reopening the research agenda. Language Learning", 41(4), pp. 469–512.

Davies, M. J. (2011). *Are the characteristics of a 'good' language learner identifiable?: An examination of the 'good' language learner assumption in a young learner EFL classroom*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Centre for English Language Studies.

Davis, P., & Florian, L. (2004). *Teaching Strategies and Approaches for Pupils with*

Special Educational Needs: A Scoping Study, Queen's Printer, Research Report No 516.

Deaney, R., Ruthven, K., & Bridley, S. (2003). "Pupil Perspectives on the Contribution of Information and Communication Technology to Teaching and Learning in the Secondary School", Research Papers in Education, Vol.18 (2), pp. 141-165.

Deci, E. L., Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier, L. G., & Ryan, R. M. (1991). "Motivation and Education: The Self-Determination Perspective, Educational psychologist", Vol. 26 (3 & 4), pp. 325-346.

Department for Education (DFE) (2012). "Children with special educational needs: an analysis."

Department for Education and Employment (1997).

Department for Education and Skills (2001).

Department for Education and Skills (2000). "Working with teaching assistants - A good practice guide", London.

Department for Education (2013). "Special educational needs (SEN): a guide for parents and carers" – Policy: Increasing options and improving provision for children with special educational needs (SEN).

Department for Education (2012). "Statistics: special educational needs (SEN) in England"- Statistical First Release.

Department for education and skills (2001). "Special Education Needs – Code of Practice".

Department of Education (2006). "Guidance for Schools – Recording Children with Special Educational Needs".

DfEE (1994). "The Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties", Circular 9/94, Nottingham, DfEE Publications.

Dörnyei, Z. (1994). "Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom", Modern Language Journal, Vol. 78, pp. 273–284.

Dörnyei, Z., & Malderez, A. (1997). "Group dynamics and foreign language teaching", System, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 65-81.

Dörnyei, Z., & Skehan, P. (2003). “Individual differences in second language learning”, in C. J. Doughty, & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* . Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 589-630.

Dyson, A., Howes, A., & Roberts, B. (2004). “A systematic review of the effectiveness of school-level actions for promoting participation by all students”, Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 34(2), pp. 143-155.

Edwards, C. & Perez Cavana, M. L. (2012). “Developing approaches to enhancing the orientation and success of language learning in higher education”, in 17th Annual Conference of the Education, Learning, Styles, Individuals Differences Network.

Ehrman, M., Leaver, B., & Oxford, R. (2003). “A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning”, Elsevier Ltd: System, Vol. 31, pp.313–330.

Ellis, A., & Abrams M. and L., (2008). *Personality theories: Critical Perspectives*, London: Sage Publications.

Ellis, R., (1997). *Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission (2013). “Support for children with special educational needs (SEN)”.

Erton, I. (2010). “Relations between personality traits, language learning styles and success in foreign language achievement”, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (H. U. Journal of Education), pp. 115-126.

European Commission (2005). “‘Special Educational Needs in Europe’: The Teaching and Learning of Languages: Insights and Innovation”.

European Commission (2002). “CLIL/EMILE The European dimension Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential”.

Eysenck, M. W. (1994). *Individual Differences: Normal and Abnormal*, Hillsdale NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Fletcher, P. & MacWhinney, B. (Eds.) (1995). *Handbook of Child Language*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Florian, L. (2005). “Inclusion, special needs and the search for new understandings.

Support for Learning", Vol. 20 (2), pp. 96–98.

Fonseca-Mora, M. C. (2005). "Individual characteristics of secondary school students", in McLaren, Madrid, and Bueno, (eds.) *TEFL in Secondary Education*, Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, pp. 79-110.

Furnham, A., Clark K., & Bailey K. (1999). "Sex Differences in Estimates of Multiple Intelligences", European Journal of Personality Eur. J. Pers. 13, pp. 247-259.

Ganschow, L., & Sparks, R. (2001). "Learning difficulties and foreign language learning: A review of research and instruction." Language Teaching , Vol. 34, pp. 79-98.

Gardner, H. E. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*, New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: the role of attitudes and motivation*, London: Edward Arnold.

Gilakjani, A. P. (2012). Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic Learning Styles and Their Impacts on English Language Teaching, Journal of Studies in Education, English Language Department, Islamic Azad University, Lahijan, Iran, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 104-113.

Griffiths, C. (2007). "Language learning strategies: Students' and teachers' perceptions", ELT Journal, Vol. 61(2), pp. 91-99.

Griffiths, C. (2012). *Lessons from Good Language Learners*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Griggs, J., & Walker, R. (2008). "A literary review - The costs of child poverty for individuals and society", Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Hawkins, E. (1996). *Thirty Years of Language Teaching*, London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.

Hymes (1972). "On communicative competence", in J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondworth: Penguin, pp. 269-285.

ISFOL, (2001). *La personalizzazione dei percorsi di apprendimento e di insegnamento*, Milano: FrancoAngeli Ed..

Istat (2013). "L'integrazione degli alunni con disabilità nelle scuole primarie e

secondario di primo statali e non statali".

Jenkinson, J.C. (1997). *Mainstream or Special? Educating Students with Disabilities*, London: Routledge.

Jonassen, D.H. & Grabowski, B.L. (2011). *Handbook of individual differences, learning and instruction*, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Jonassen, D.H. & Grabowski, B.L. (1993). *Handbook of individual differences, learning and instruction*, 1st edn., Lawrance Erlbaurn Associates, USA.

Kaboody, M. (2013). "Second Language Motivation; The Role of Teachers in Learners' Motivation", Journal of Academic and Applied Studies, Vol. 3 (4) February 2013, pp. 45-54.

Kazu, I.Y. (2009). "The Effect of Learning Styles on Education and the Teaching Process", Journal of Social Sciences, Vol. 5 (2), pp. 85-94.

Kocić, M. (2010). "The Effects of Aptutude on Language Learning", Komunikacija i kultura online: Godina I, broj 1.

Krashen S. D. (1981). "Aptitude and attitude in relation to second language acquisition and learning", in Diller, K. C. (ed.), *Individual Differences and Universals in Language Learning Aptitude*, Rowley, MA: Newbury House, pp. 155-175.

Krashen, S.D. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Lanvers, U. (2011). "Language Education Policy in England: is English the elephant in the room?", Apples - Journal of Applied Language Studies, Vol. 5 (3), pp. 63-78.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & Long, M. H. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*, London: Longman.

Lewis, A. and Norwich B. (2001). "A Critical Review of Systematic Evidence concerning Distinctive Pedagogies with Pupils with Difficulties in Learning", Vol. 1 (1) Journal of Research in *Special Educational Needs*, Tamworth: National Association for Special Educational Needs.

Lewis, A. & Norwich, B. (2001). "Mapping a Pedagogy for Special Educational Needs", Exeter: University of Exeter and University of Warwick.

Lightbown, L. & Spada, N. (1999 and 2006). *How languages are learned*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lyon, G. R. (1996). "Learning Disabilities, in The Future of Children- Special Education for Students with disabilities", Vol. 6 (1), pp. 1-8.

Machin S., & Vignoles, A. (2006). *Education Policy in the UK,* London: Centre for the Economics of Education.

Manchon, R. M. (2009). "Individual differences in foreign language learning: the dynamics of beliefs about L2 writing", Vol.4, pp. 245-268.

Martos, R. M. C. (2006). "Second language acquisition, psychological factors, cognitive factors", Aldadis, La rivista de educacion, No. 9, pp. 48-49.

McColl, H. (2000). *Modern Languages for All*, London: David Fulton Publishers.

McEachern – Kelly, (2008). *Provision Of Modern Foreign Languages For Lower Achievers And Pupils With Special Educational Needs In Secondary Schools In England, Scotland And The Czech Republic*, Glasgow: Faculty of Education.

McKeown, S. (2004). *Meeting SEN in the Curriculum: Modern Foreign Languages*, London: David Fulton Publishers.

McLagan, P. (1994). "Grammar and the "less able" learner", in King L. and Boaks, P. (eds) *Grammar: A conference report*, London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.

Moradi, A. (2012). "Individual Differences in Language Teaching", Quarterly Journal of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vo1.2, No.5, pp. 1-15.

Munn, P., Lloyd, G., & Cullen, M. A. (2000). *Alternatives to Exclusion From School*, London: Sage Publication.

Nassaji, H., & Fotos S. S. (2011). *Teaching Grammar in Second Language Classroom*, Oxon: Routledge – Taylor and Francis.

NASUWT (2008). *Special Education Needs ad Inclusion: Reflection and Renew*, Birmingham: Clarkeprint Ltd.

National Council for Special Education (2006).

Nelson, K. (1981). “Individual Differences in Language Development:Implications for Development and Language”, Developmental Psychology, Vol. 17 (2), pp. 170-187.

Norton and Toohey (2011). “Identity, language learning, and social change”, Language Teaching, Vol. 44, Issue 04, pp. 412-446.

Nunan, D. (2000). *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers*, Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Olivares-Cuhat (2010). *Relative Importance of Learning Variables on L2 performance*, University of Nortern Iowa, Linguistik online 43 (3).

Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). “Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework”, Modern Language Journal, Vol. 78 (1), pp. 12-28.

Peterson, J. M., & Hittie M. M. (2010). *Inclusive Teaching: The Journey Towards Effective Schools for All Learners*, New York: Pearson.

Piechurska-Kuciel, E. & Szymanska-Czaplak, E. (2013). “Language in Cognition and Affect”, Berlin Heidelberg: Springer, pp 239-253.

Poole, A. (2005). “Focus on Form Instruction: foundations, applications, and criticisms”, The Reading Matrix, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 47-57.

Richard, E. (2007). I*ndividual Differences and Second Language Acquisition among Low-Income Preschoolers*, Unpublished thesis, George Mason University.

Richards, J. C. & Renandya, W. A. (2003). *Methodology Language Teaching, An Anthology of Current Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. & Schmidt, R. W. (1983). *Language and communication*, London: Longman.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S., (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, P. (2002). *Individual Differences and Instructed Language Learning,* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co..

Rubio, F. (2007). *Self-Esteem and Foreign Language Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Sadeghi, N., Kasim, M. H., Tan, B. H., Abdullah, F. S. (2012). "Learning Styles, Personality Types and Reading Comprehension Performance", English Language Teaching, Vol. 5 (4), pp. 116-123.

Sánchez, J. C. (2012). *Entrepreneurial Intentions: The Role of the Cognitive Variables*, Salamance, Spain: University of Salamanca.

Schmeck, R. R. (1988). *Learning strategies and learning styles*, New York: Plenum Press.

Scruggs, T.E. & Mastropieri, M.A. (2000). "The Effectiveness of Mnemonic Instruction for Students with Learning and Behavior Problems: An Update and Research Synthesis", Journal of Behavioral Education, 10 (2/3), pp. 163-173.

Shakouri N., & Saligheh, M. (2012). "Revisiting Age and Gender Influence in Second Language Acquisition", Advances in English Linguistics (AEL) 1 Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 1-6.

Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual differences in second-language learning*, London: Edward Arnold.

Sparks, R. L., & Ganschow, L. (1996). "Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Foreign Language Academic Skills and Affective Characteristics". Journal of Educational Research 89, pp. 172–185.

Spielberger, C. D. (1966). *Anxiety and behavior*, New York: Academic Press.

Stakes R. & Hornby, G. (2000). *Meeting Special Needs in Mainstream Schools: A Practical Guide for Teachers*, Oxon: David Fulton Publishers.

Sternberg, R. J. (1990). *Metaphors of Mind: Conceptions of the Nature of Intelligence*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Swarbrick, A., (2002). *Differentiation in Aspects of Teaching Secondary Modern Foreign Languages Perspectives and Practice*, London: Routledge Falmer.

Teepen, J. (2004). "On the Relationship between Aptitude and Intelligence in Second Language Acquisition", Teachers College, Columbia University Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics, Vol. 4.

Terzi, L. (2010). *Justice and Equality in Education: A Capability Perspective on Disability and Special Educational Needs*, Continuum Publishing Corporation.

Torresan, P. (2010). *The theory of Multiple Intelligences and language teaching*, Guerra Edizioni, Department of Language Sciences, Ca' Foscari University, Venice.

Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) (2009).

UNESCO (2009). *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*

Viskari, K. (2005). *Foreign Language Learning Disabilities*, Jyvaskyla: University of Jyvaskyla, Department of Languages.

Wang, H. L. (2009). "Should All Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) Be Included in Mainstream Education Provision?" - A Critical Analysis, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp.154-161.

Wenden A., & Rubin, J. (1991). "Learner Strategies in Language Learning", Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International.

Woodward, J., Gallagher, D. and Rieth, H. (2001). "The instructional effectiveness of technology for students with disabilities", in J. Woodward and L. Cuban (eds) Technology, Curriculum and Professional Development: *Adapting Schools to Meet the Needs of Students with Disabilities*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Yates, L. (2011). "Interaction, language learning and social inclusion in early settlement", International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 457-471.

Zafar, S. & and Meenakshi, K. (2012). "Review of PhD Theses on the Role of Personality in SLA", Vol. 2 (1), pp. 94-99.

Zafar, S. & Meenakshi, K. (2011). "A study on the relationship between extroversion-introversion and risk-taking in the context of second language acquisition", International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning, Vol.1 (1), pp.33-40.

Zare, P. and Riasati, M. J. (2012). "The Relationship between Language Learning Anxiety, Self-Esteem, and Academic Level among Iranian EFL Learners", Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum., Vol. 20 (1), pp. 219 – 225.

Zhengdong Gan (2011). “L2 Learner Individual Differences: An Integrative and Contextualist Perspective”, Hong Kong Institute of Education - Reflections on English Language Teaching, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 67–88.

Internet references

http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk

http://www.languageswithoutlimits.co.uk/autism.html

http://www.brighthubeducation.com/

(http://specialed.about.com/cs/teacherstrategies/a/hearing.htm

http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/hydrocephalus.html

http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/

http://www.goodtherapy.org

https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/types-of-support

http://www.nurturegroups.org/pages/what-are-nurture-groups.html#sthash.Tlc9iHQ0.dpuf

http://www.benziger.org/articlesIng/?p=30

http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/26319/

http://www.eltworld.net/